John of Damascus and Islam

History of Christian-Muslim Relations

VOLUME 34

Christians and Muslims have been involved in exchanges over matters of faith and morality since the founding of Islam. Attitudes between the faiths today are deeply coloured by the legacy of past encounters, and often preserve centuries-old negative views.

The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, Texts and Studies presents the surviving record of past encounters in a variety of forms: authoritative, text editions and annotated translations, studies of authors and their works and collections of essays on particular themes and historical periods. It illustrates the development in mutual perceptions as these are contained in surviving Christian and Muslim writings, and makes available the arguments and rhetorical strategies that, for good or for ill, have left their mark on attitudes today. The series casts light on a history marked by intellectual creativity and occasional breakthroughs in communication, although, on the whole beset by misunderstanding and misrepresentation. By making this history better known, the series seeks to contribute to improved recognition between Christians and Muslims in the future.

A number of volumes of the *History of Christian-Muslim Relations* series are published within the subseries *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*.

The titles published in this series are listed at *brill.com/hcmr*

John of Damascus and Islam

Christian Heresiology and the Intellectual Background to Earliest Christian-Muslim Relations

By

Peter Schadler

BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Cover illustration: Icon of John of Damascus, hand-painted by Dmitri Shkolnik. It is located in St. John of Damascus Antiochian Orthodox Church, Dedham, Massachusetts. The text St. John is holding is a pre-communion prayer ascribed to him, which reads, "Open unto me the compassion of thy love toward mankind and receive me as I approach and touch thee."

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Schadler, Peter, 1979– author.
Title: John of Damascus and Islam : Christian heresiology and the intellectual background to earliest Christian-Muslim relations / by Peter Schadler.
Description: Leiden ; Boston : Brill, 2018. | Series: History of Christian-Muslim relations, ISSN 1570–7350 ; VOLUME 34 | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017044207 (print) | LCCN 2017047975 (ebook) | ISBN 9789004356054 (E-book) | ISBN 9789004349650 (hardback : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: John, of Damascus, Saint. | Christianity and other religions—Islam. | Islam—Relations—Christianity. | Christian heresies.
Classification: LCC BR1720.J59 (ebook) | LCC BR1720.J59 S33 2017 (print) | DDC 261.2/709021—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017044207

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1570-7350
ISBN 978-90-04-34965-0 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-35605-4 (e-book)

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

Contents

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank first my supervisors, Elizabeth Jeffreys, and Chase Robinson for their patience in reviewing my work repeatedly and for their sincere efforts to meet my own particular needs to bring to my work the professionalism requisite in such an academic endeavor. My thanks also go to David Gwynn, who read through substantial portions of the book after it had undergone radical revisions. His comments were instrumental in improving the finished product. I wish also to thank my wife Sarah, whose patience has been inexhaustible, not to mention her love and prayers. I wish also to thank my many friends who have proofread sections of the book, offered moral support throughout the last several years and made suggestions for where to look and on what to focus. Any mistakes are, of course, my own. Any great insight can be the result only of God's own gift.

Abbreviations

AB	Analecta Bollandiana
Byz	*Byzantion*
BF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
Bsl	*Byzantinoslavica*
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
ChH	Church History
CNRS	Centre national de la recherche scientifique
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium
CSHB	Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae
Der Islam	*Der Islam. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DTC	*Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*
EI^2	Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition, ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al. Leiden and London, 1960–proceeding
EQ	*Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*
ER	Encyclopedia of Religion
GOTR	*Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
GRBS	Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
JA	Journal Asiatique
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JMEMS	Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JÖB	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
JQS	Journal of Qur'anic Studies
JSAI	Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
MW	*Muslim World*
OCA	*Orientalia christiana analecta*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
ODB	*Oxford dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. P. Kazhdan *et al.*, 3 vols. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991)

PdO	*Parole de l'Orient*
PG	*Patrologiae graecae cursus completus*, e.d. J.-P. Migne. 161 vols. Paris, 1857–66
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
REB	*Revue des 'Etudes Byzantines*
Sp	*Speculum*
StPatr	Studia Patristica
TM	*Travaux et Mémoires*
VC	Vigiliae Christianae

Introduction

Scholarship in the theological and historical study of heresy, and scholarship in all fields relating to Islamic Studies over the past forty years have advanced and developed in ways unparalleled in most other fields. Heresiological studies in the Christian tradition, broadly defined, find their modern origins in two works, approaching the study of heresy from two very different perspectives, both of which focused on the first three centuries after Christ. Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, published in 1934, but only achieving wider notoriety and increasing interest after its appearance in English as *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* in 1972, sought to overturns centuries of received scholarship that heretical groups spun off from and established Church and were marginal to that Church in the first three centuries.[1] He argued that in many places so-called 'heretical' versions of Christianity preceded the arrival of what would become the state-sponsored imperial Church.

Perhaps the most important of these was Allain Le Boulluec's *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque: iie–iiie siècles*. This hefty two-volume work, published in 1985, approached the concept of heresy and the Christian use of the Greek term as it had been employed as a term to describe different schools of thought within a larger field, particularly in the fields of philosophy and medicine.[2] Following these two works, increased attention to the nature of heresiologies, or works composed of lists of heresies, has gained considerably, and wide areas of study have been developed dealing with heresy and what characterized it for the earliest Christians, including heresy and identity, and even comparative religious heresiology.[3] These have all impacted greatly on how we understand what Christians were trying to do when they compiled polemical accounts of their theological opponents, and how they organized their knowledge of what they considered were non-conforming groups of people and their beliefs and practices, of which, Islam would certainly become one.

1 W. Bauer, R. A. Kraft, and G. Krodel, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (SCM Press, 1972).

2 H. V. Staden, 'Hairesis and Heresy: The Case of the haireseis iatrikai', in B. F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (SCM Press, 1982), pp. 76–100.

3 See, with further bibliography, E. Iricinschi and H. M. Zellentin (eds.), *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008), and J. B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and Early Christian Patterns* (State University of New York Press, 1998).

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_002

Similarly, in the field of Islamic Studies, increased study of the literary sources, new data from archaeological finds, and greater interest in the field have aided in a process of rapid growth. Additionally, new methodologies for the study of early Islam have emerged, and these have shed new light on source material that was once viewed through different lenses. Until thirty years ago western scholars were inclined to view Islam as monolithic from the very beginning. While not always accepting the traditional Islamic account of early origins, they nonetheless envisaged Islam to be a normative system of belief and codified by the end of the century following the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632.

In more recent times it has become apparent that this view is no longer sustainable, and here again, a few works in the late 1970s have inaugurated whole new avenues of research in early Islamic Studies. A pair of works published by John Wansbrough in 1977 and 78 focusing on the Qur'an, and *Hagarism* by Patricia Crone and Michael Cook published in 1977 point in the same direction.[4] These scholars were followed by Judith Koren and Yehuda Nevo,[5] Gerald Hawting,[6] Norman Calder,[7] and others who typify a generation of scholars who have questioned the traditional account of Islamic origins, arguing that sources within the Islamic tradition are to be treated with great discretion, if used at all. These so-called skeptical 'revisionists', although not united in their own views, have urged the modern historian to step outside of the Islamic tradition and 'start again', in an effort to discover the true history of early Islamic origins, and attempt to understand this more gradual process characterized by widespread doctrinal pluralism and ambiguity of authority.

Thus, a need for fresh analysis of certain key primary texts that describe the religion today known as 'Islam' both to document how the people living directly in contact with believers of that faith perceived it during its formative

4 J. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, 31 (Oxford University Press, 1977), J. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, 34 (Oxford University Press, 1978), P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, (Cambridge 1977).

5 Judith Koren and Yehuda D. Nevo, "Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies", *Der Islam* 68 (1991), pp. 87–107.

6 For example, G. R. Hawting, "The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca", *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, G. H. A. Juynboll, (Carbondale and Edwardsville 1982), pp. 23–47, and G. R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam, from Polemic to History*, (Cambridge 1999).

7 For example, Norman Calder, "From Midrash to Scripture: the Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition", *Le Muséon* 101 (1988), pp. 375–402, and Norman Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, (Oxford 1993).

years, and the various strands of early Islamic tradition itself. The Greek theological literature of the eighth century tells us a considerable amount concerning early Islam when measured in light of more recent scholarship done in the field.[8] The following is an attempt to offer a more accurate appraisal of one eighth-century theologian's perception of Islam, and the potential his work has to offer one historically and theologically accurate perspective on that new faith. The writings of John of Damascus (c. 650–750 AD) on Islam have been studied several times, but these have neither attempted to understand John's position in (or dissonance with) the theological tradition of heresiological discourse, nor have efforts yet been made to place him in his historical context with reference to the more recent scholarship in the rapidly growing field of Islamic Studies.

John of Damascus has proved a very difficult figure for historians to identify. Evidence regarding the date of most of his works is elusive, and this is because much of the evidence regarding his life is elusive. For information about him we are largely reliant on hagiographical and historical sources written some time after his death.[9] He was born between 650 and 675, but exactly when is not known. His father probably served as a financial administrator for the caliph Abd al-Malik (685–705),[10] and so John was well educated, growing up in Damascus around the conquering elite but also still in the midst of a vibrant Roman/Hellenic culture. Their family name, Sarjun, implies a Syrian provenance but most scholars have taken the view that John was probably not an Arab.[11] He likely followed in his father's footsteps in Damascus, and served as a

8 It has been noted that much of this writing has gone under-utilized by historians. See A. Cameron, 'New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature: Seventh-Eighth Centuries', in L. I. Conrad and A. Cameron (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1989), p. 104.

9 For this and the following I am indebted to the valuable study of the Damascene by A. Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 3–14. Also see M.-F. Auzépy, 'De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIII[e]–IX[e] Siècles): Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène', *TM* 12 (1994), pp. 183–218.

10 Theophanes calls him 'γενικὸς λογοθέτης', (C. De Boor (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* 2 vols. (Georg Olms, 1963), pp. 365–66, AM 6183), a term whose meaning is somewhat unclear. Other historians such as Michael the Syrian record that he was the secretary to 'Abd al-Malik. See Mango's note in C. Mango and R. Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813* (Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 510.

11 D. J. Sahas, 'The Arab Character of The Christian Disputation with Islam: The Case of John of Damascus (ca. 655–ca. 749)', in B. Lewis and F. Niewöhner (eds.), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter* (Otto Harrasowitz, 1992), pp. 185–205, at 204. Also Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam*,

financial administrator during the reign of Abd al-Malik (685–705) and at some point in the early eighth century moved either to a monastery near Jerusalem, which may be the well known monastery of St. Sabas, or to Jerusalem itself to act as a patriarchal adviser.[12] It is presumed he wrote much of what we have of his works today at this stage of his life, while accessing either the patriarchal libraries in Jerusalem, or the library at St. Sabas. He was clearly well connected, and aware of events taking place in the empire and in Sinai, for his writings show support of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680–81) and the Council of Trullo (692),[13] and he quotes Anastasius of Sinai (d. c. 700).[14] His treatises on Iconoclasm mention specific events that took place in Constantinople as late as 730.[15] He died around the year 750, as Theophanes mentions him in his historical chronicle under the entry for 742, but he is anathematized as though

p. 43. This is despite the fact that Mansour, John's name prior to his life as a monk, is of Arabic derivation, and that it is well known that there were many Arabs living in Roman Syria by this time. This view aside, debate on exactly what constitutes an 'Arab' directly affects any considerations of John of Damascus and the terminology we choose to describe him. At the time of writing this volume a colleague of mine argues passionately that the Damascene is an Arab, on the basis that he must have known Arabic, is always depicted in iconography wearing a turban, and came from Syria with the surname 'Mansour'. The second of these is an obvious stereotype, but serves to illustrate the continuing problem of identity and in particular what constitutes an 'Arab.' Averil Cameron has suggested that Byzantines in John's situation must have had an identity crisis, although she does not suggest this on the basis of whether or not he considered himself an Arab, but only as a result of his changing circumstances. See Cameron, 'New Themes and Styles', p. 125.

12 V. S. Conticello, 'Jean Damascène', in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* (Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 2000), pp. 989–1012. It has long been taken for granted that John moved to St. Sabas, but this assumption is similarly based on the late historical sources we have for John's life, which Louth summarizes in his work. It is now known, however, that St. Sabas was seen as a beacon of orthodoxy in the centuries following John's death, and prominent Melkite theologians were frequently attached to it in the sources to add verisimilitude to their orthodoxy, and theological excellence. See J. Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Peeters, 2001) for study of that issue. Conticello does a good job showing that there is really no positive evidence for John's move to St. Sabas that is either contemporary with him, or even datable shortly after his death.

13 B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 5 vols. (Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29, 1969–88) vol. III, p. 190, ln. 6.

14 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. II, p. 112, ln. 39, and p. 171, ln. 19.

15 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. III, p. 103, ln. 25–30. Also see A. Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises On the Divine Images* (SVS Press, 2003), pp. 10–14.

dead at the Iconoclast Council of Hieria in 754.[16] He was perhaps the most significant theologian of the late patristic period, often referred to as the last 'Father of the Church'.[17]

During his life, he wrote extensively in many fields, including liturgical poetry, dogmatic theology, and sermons. It is with his work in the field of theology that we are mainly concerned here, as it contains what is now recognized as the first Christian polemical treatise on Islam in Greek. In its intended location, this text is found contained in a work entitled, Πηγὴ Γνώσεως (*Pege Gnoseos*), or 'Fount of Knowledge', which is a compilation of three works; the Εἰσαγωγὴ δογμάτων στοιχειώδης (*Elementary Introduction to Dogma*), Περὶ Αἱρέσεων (*On Heresies*), and Ἔκδοσις ἀκριβὴς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*).[18] The three works do not always appear together in the manuscript tradition, but have come in most editions today to be translated and

16 De Boor (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 417, ln. 16–22, AM 6234; Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 578. For the anathema against John (called by his Arabic name 'Mansour' in order to slur him) see J. D. Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* 31 vols. (1759–98) vol. XIII, 356C–D, also found in D. J. Sahas (trans.), *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 168.

17 I have not been able to ascertain the origins of this appellation, often cited in articles and books on John of Damascus. It appears to have originated with the Roman Catholic Church in the form that John was the last of the 'Greek Fathers' of the Church, Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) being the last of the 'Fathers'. See the entries for 'St. John Damascene' and 'Fathers' in C. G. Herbermann, E. A. Pace et al., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, 17 vols. (Robert Appleton, 1910). The idea that John was the last of the 'Church Fathers' has probably been extrapolated from the view that he has been called the last of the 'Greek Fathers'. The 'Patristic period' is normally conceived in modern Academia to have culminated in the eighth century, and it may be that given this division it was natural to see John as the last Father. For a summary of the development of 'Patristics' as a discipline, and the difficulties in delimiting it as a field, see G. R. Evans and M. Ludlow, 'Patristics', in G. Jones (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology* (Basil Blackwell, 2004), pp. 113–32.

18 The title '*Fount of Knowledge*' does not appear to have been used by John to refer to the whole of the work, but has come in academic parlance to be employed for the sake of convenience. Other common ways of referring to the three works themselves employ the Latin terminology of the *Institutio Elementaris Capita Philosophica* (or *Dialectica*), and *Liber de Haeresibus*, and the *Expositio Fidei* or *De Fide Orthodoxa*. For the purposes of convenience, and for the sake of consistency with prior recent works on John and his writings, I normally refer below to the *Dialectica, On Heresies*, and *On the Orthodox Faith*. See Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 31–32.

studied under the combined heading of 'The Fount of Knowledge', a tradition I continue here.[19]

The text on Islam is located in the work called *On Heresies*.[20] It is found as the last chapter in that book, which describes 100 different heresies against which Christians should be on guard.[21] This might seem an odd place for a Christian work on Islam, and its categorization as a 'heresy' should be a major concern to modern historians and theologians trying to understand the history of Christian-Muslim relations. Quite a number of scholars have come to quick assumptions about what John's placement of his work on Islam in a book on heresies implies. A major concern of this book is the intellectual background to this seemingly odd categorization, and why John incorporated a work on Islam in a book on heresies. As I thought about John's decision, it became clear that an intellectual and theological understanding of the many things that could be called 'heresy' was crucial to an understanding of how John of Damascus—and indeed any other Christians who used the term of Islam—processed that new faith. His use of the term so starkly colors all other aspects of his writing on Islam, and so strikes our postmodern ears, that without such analysis we will effectively misconstrue anything he has to say about it.

The chapter on Islam is not long, taking up only seven pages in the most recent critical edition of the text. Close textual analysis of some of the word choices John makes in describing Islam, as well as those made by his predecessors and successors can be used to show that John did not see Islam in the way modern scholarship has often supposed. The nomenclature in use to describe early Muslims as Ishmaelites, Saracens, and Hagarenes was inherited by Chrisitians like John from earlier Roman historians, and continued use of these terms themselves has something to tell us about how John and other Christians

19 For a detailed explanation of the manuscript tradition, see Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 31–37. For a modern translation of this work, see F. H. Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings* (Catholic University of America Press, 1958).

20 As alluded to above, the work *On Heresies* was intended by John to be a part of the larger work. The manuscript tradition, however, makes clear that John's intentions were for the most part overtaken and the work did not circulate extensively as a three-part whole, leading some to question the final intentions of the author. More on this is offered in chapter 1, but the reader should refer to Louth, *St. John Damascene*, and bibliography for full discussion.

21 This work will be described further below, but is found now in Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, pp. 60–67. For the moment the reader should also understand that the text has been studied previously as *Heresy 101* in John's work *On Heresies*, a title corrected by Kotter as he revealed John's original work to have consisted of exactly one hundred heresies, of which that on Islam is the last.

understood Islam, as I discuss below. As regards John's other writings on Islam (if indeed there are any), they are difficult to assess, if not least because there is no final agreement on which texts commenting on Islam the Damascene wrote, nor is there always clarity on whether John was commenting on aspects of Islam in some of his writings that fail to identify Islam or Muslims explicitly.[22] The so-called dialogue between a Saracen and a Christian is probably not the work of John, although it has been argued that the teachings in it should at least go back to his time, if not to John himself.[23] Hymnography that has been attributed to John that makes mention of Ishmaelites or Saracens has been analyzed by others, but the attributions of such works to John are made on shaky ground at best, making the use of such texts to get at what John was thinking dangerous.[24] I have made no attempt to assess the authenticity of this literature, nor would such an attempt be likely to yield much fruit, the manuscript tradition for Byzantine hymnography being as vast and labyrinthine as it is, especially in reference to those named 'John'.[25] It is, however, necessary to briefly address the question of whether or not the text that is the focus of this book may proceed from another hand, and what effect the question of authorship has on the present work.

It has been suggested that John took much of his book *On Heresies* principally from a work that has been given the title *Doctrina Patrum de*

22 To prepare the reader, it was not until some time well after John's death that the terms 'Islam' and 'Muslim' were used to describe the faith and its adherents. At this early stage the terms 'Saracen', 'Ishmaelite', and 'Hagarene' are common, as well as others, although even here John may be referring to Islam and Muslims when not adhering to this nomenclature. This is discussed further in chapter 4.

23 For the evidence that this work is actually the product of another hand, see the work of J. C. Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', *GRBS* 42 (2001), pp. 361–86, in conjunction with that of R. Glei and A.-T. Khoury (eds.), *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurra. Schriften zum Islam* (Echter, 1995), pp. 59–62. For the claim that the arguments found in the text go back to John, see R. Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam: Presentation with Introduction, Translation, and Commentaries* (Les Editions Du Cerf, 1992), pp. 198–203.

24 J. Meyendorff, 'Byzantine View of Islam', *DOP* 18 (1964), pp. 115–32. In all cases the references collectively amount to little more than a couple of lines of poetry, certainly open to differing interpretations.

25 Kazhdan has shown that determining John's authorship from the manuscript tradition in a number of cases is problematic, partly given the difficulty in isolating the Damascene from other Johns, and partly because John of Damascus' authorship of some works have been questioned as early as the 12th century and by at least one of his biographers. A. P. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)* (National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1999), pp. 87–90.

Incarnatione Verbi.[26] This work, which was edited by Franz Diekamp at the beginning of the twentieth century, has received far too little attention by scholars to date. It is essentially a florilegium, or compilation of excerpts from other patristic and philosophical writings put together by an as yet undetermined author in the late seventh or early eighth century, but existing in many recensions, other authors having added to it as they received it.[27] This, together with the extensive manuscript tradition, makes attribution of a precise date difficult, and Diekamp could only postulate a date after the sixth ecumenical council (681), and before the beginning of Iconoclasm (726), of which the *Doctrina* seems unaware. Diekamp could not completely solve many of the difficulties surrounding the text. That John copied part of his work from the *Doctrina Patrum* is a possibility, and would be in keeping with his methodology. As he himself states, the Damascene was a systematic compiler.[28] If he did not copy all or part of his heresiology from the *Doctrina Patrum*, we are at least certain that he received the first 80 heresies in his book from another source, the well known heresiology called the *Panarion*, written by Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 315–c. 403).[29]

The extent to which John of Damascus was familiar with the *Panarion* of Epiphanius has itself been the topic of some debate. John does not simply take

---

26 F. Diekamp (ed.), *Doctina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi* (Aschendorff, 1981).

27 Diekamp (ed.), *Doctrina Patrum*, p. LXXX. Diekamp suspects the author may be Anastasius of Sinai, but this is far from certain, and as I will show below, has certain problems. One obvious difficulty is that current scholarship estimates the death date of Anastasius not long after 700. Another suggestion, put forward by Stiglmayr, and recently supported by the modern introducers of the *Doctrina's* second edition is that Anastasius Apocrisarius, a disciple of Maximus the Confessor, is responsible for the main body of the work. See J. Stiglmayr, 'Der Verfasser der Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi', *BZ* 18.1 (1909), pp. 14–40. It should be added that if this were true, the *Doctrina Patrum* would have to have a *terminus ante quem* of 666, the date of Anastasius' death. This would considerably alter current scholarly assessments of the *Doctrina* and authors from whom texts appear in it such as John and Anastasius of Sinai, perhaps the reason the view has not gained full support.

28 On John's method of compiling the *The Fount of Knowledge*, see further below.

29 More will be said about this work below. The *Panarion* is an enormous heresiology consisting of 80 heresies, symbolizing the 80 concubines in the *Song of Songs*. See K. Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion* (Akademie-Verlag, 1915), K. Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64* (2nd edn., Akademie-Verlag, 1980), and K. Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80* (2nd edn., Akademie-Verlag, 1985) for the text. See F. Williams (trans.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis Book I* (*Sects 1–46*) (Brill, 1987) and F. Williams (trans.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis Books II and III* (*Sects 47–80*) (Brill, 1994) for a translation.

the heresies that Epiphanius lists and attach them to his twenty additional ones. The *Panarion* was a large work, which had seven summaries (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις) of the heresies incorporated into it, at least as far as the manuscript tradition is concerned.[30] The seven summaries are spaced throughout the text, and in fact divide up the heresies as we have received them. But the summaries, or *Anacephalaeosis*, also circulated independently of the *Panarion* as a whole.[31] It is these summaries or epitome of the larger work that John used as part of his book *On Heresies*. Knorr has argued that the Damascene must have had access to the full text of the *Panarion* on the grounds that the different recensions of the *Anacephalaeosis* (MPG 42.833–885 and K. Holl GCS 25) actually represent different versions of the text, only one of which was written by Epiphanius himself, the other of which is a later summary. He argues that these recensions are confused and that Kotter assembled his critical edition of the Damascene's work without leaving room for this fact, and the possibility that John accessed the version written by Epiphanius himself.[32]

Louth suggested that John did not know the *Panarion* very well, on the basis that John added the Donatists as a heresy in his work, when this heresy was already covered by Epiphanius in the *Panarion* on the sect of the Cathars.[33] Information on the Donatists is not found in the corresponding *Anacephalaeosis*, where one might expect to find a short summary, and it is on this basis that Louth suggests John may not have known the *Panarion* itself.[34] However, Louth's argument is not conclusive, as he himself points out. The Donatists appear as merely a footnote in Epiphanius' work, mentioned only in the last few lines of the sect on the Cathars, and there portrayed as requiring no further comment.[35] John, on the other hand, adds material regarding the Donatists not covered in the *Panarion*, and this could provide at least one reason why he would add the group to his list of heresies. Additionally, if John

30 There is some debate about whether the Anacephalaeoses were written by Epiphanius or more probably by one of his disciples. More on this will be offered below in chapter 2.

31 Augustine used them in this way as the basis of his work *Contra Omnes Haereses*. See R.J. Teske (ed.), *Arianism and Other Heresies by Augustine of Hippo* (New City Press, 1995), p. 17.

32 O. Knorr, 'Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte des "Liber de Haeresibus" des Johannes von Damaskus (um 650–vor 754): Anmerkungen zur Edition B. Kotters', *BZ* 91 (1998), pp. 59–69 and O. Knorr, 'Die Parallelüberlieferung zum Panarion des Epiphanius von Salamis', *Wiener Studien*, 112 (1999), pp. 113–27.

33 Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64*, pp. 363–80, titled *Against the Impure 'Purists'* in Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, pp. 102–12.

34 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, p. 60.

35 Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64*, pp. 378–79.

were composing a work of his own, using only the *Anacephalaeosis* of Epiphanius' full text, he may well have seen the need to add the Donatists as an additional heresy if he was not incorporating the full text of the *Panarion* which contained information on the group. Finally, it is clear that the Damascene was familiar with Epiphanius' other works as he cites them in his own treatises, and this further suggests that he was aware of the *Panarion*. John quotes the *Ancoratus*,[36] and Epiphanius' treatise on *Weights and Measures*.[37] It would seem likely that he was also familiar with the text Epiphanius is purported to have written against the use of images in worship, as John discusses that work in his treatise *On Holy Images*.[38]

What is certainly clear, however, is that even had John received most of his work from other sources, including some of the chapter on Islam, he further added to it. The section on Islam that appears in chapter 34 of the *Doctrina Patrum* comes to an end with God taking Christ up to heaven "because he loved him".[39] This ending in itself suggests John may have only been responsible for what follows it in his chapter on Islam. The style of the chapter changes somewhat following this episode, after which a semi-dialogical form takes over the remainder of the work, in which first God and Jesus engage in conversation, and then a 'we say'/'they say' structure for the substantial remainder of the text, where 'we' are the Christians, and 'they' are the Ishmaelites.[40]

At the same time, it is still possible that John is responsible for the full work *On Heresies*, and that a later scribe shortened the chapter on Islam before inserting it in a later copy of the *Doctrina Patrum* to give us what we have today. The truth is not clear, and the case has been put forward for both possibilities. Diekamp argued for the view that John took his work from the *Doctrina Patrum*,

---

36 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. II, pp. 173–174 and p. 238.

37 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, pp. 210–211. Epiphanius' corresponding text can be found at PG 43.244A.

38 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. III, p. 116; Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises*, p. 38. Epiphanius' text itself is now lost to antiquity, if indeed it existed, which current scholarship argues is likely. John may only have been familiar with the arguments Iconoclasts claimed were made by Epiphanius, and not the text itself. The only portions which may survive of the works are now found in the documents of the seventh Ecumenical Council of 781. See Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, 13.292D–E. See also Sahas (trans.), *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm*, pp. 22–23, n94 for bibliography regarding the authenticity of the iconoclast works attributed to him.

39 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 61, ln. 24–25.

40 See for example Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 61 lns. 25–30 and p. 62, lns. 47–55.

while Kotter has argued for the possibility of the latter.[41] It would equally have been within the working methodology of the compiler of the *Doctrina* to have lifted *On Heresies* from John's work, had he had access to it, and, for reasons I offer below, I tend to favor this possibility.

In what follows, however, I do not concern myself greatly with the question of the authenticity of the work. This is because as I try to trace the intellectual and philological history of the conception of the word 'heresy', and explain how John could use it to apply to Islam, it is not vitally important to determine whether John himself is responsible for the whole of the chapter on Islam in question, or copied it from the *Doctrina Patrum*. John's acceptance of the application of the term 'heresy' to Islam is what has upset scholars, and it is what interests me, along with his understanding of that term more generally. As we can be certain that at the minimum he took the text and supplemented it, and at most wrote the full text himself, he has committed himself to the application, and for that matter to the manner in which the last twenty heresies are described in *On Heresies.*

I have also not attempted a detailed speculation on what writings of John's might possibly refer to Islamic practices, but which bear no direct reference to Islam. In most cases, the differences between Islamic, pseudo-Islamic, Jewish, pagan, and other practices were could be so minute that to declare, for example, that John was referring to Islam when he wrote against circumcision, would stretch the limits of scholarly integrity.[42] While it may be that by not attributing such references to Islam I have failed to acquire a more extensive picture of John's views, I take refuge in the fact that the text I have chosen to analyze is both the Damascene's most detailed analysis of Islam, and that most likely to be authentically written by him.[43] Thus in what follows I do not attempt an analysis of what could 'potentially be considered the Damascene's corpus of writings on Islam', but only an analysis of that text which is most explicitly by the Damascene, and which undoubtedly referred to what contemporary historians and theologians denominate as 'Islam'.

---

41 See Diekamp (ed.), *Doctrina Patrum*, pp. lxix–lxxiv and B. Kotter, *Die Überlieferung der Pege Gnoseos des hl. Johannes von Damaskos* (Buch-Kunstverlag, 1959), pp. 211–14. The earliest manuscript of the *Doctrina Patrum* is the Codex Vaticanus Graecus 2200, which dates from the 8–9th century, and so after John. It is also the only manuscript to contain the chapter on Islam.

42 Louth refrains from a similar assessment, while pointing to the possibility that such texts were written with Islam in mind. Louth, *St. John Damascene*, p. 85.

43 The authenticity of John's work will be discussed further below.

To acknowledge that John is mostly likely the author of this short text does not, unfortunately, clarify when exactly it was written or how it was used. Thümmel argued that the *De Haeresibus* circulated independently of the *The Fount of Knowledge* because John ultimately decided not to include it in his larger work, despite what Thümmel surmised to have been his first intentions, which can be found in the dedicatory epistle to the whole of the work. His explanation for why the dedicatory epistle outlines a three-part plan of the *Dialectica, De Haeresibus*, and *De Fide Orthodoxa*, is that such was the original plan of the work, which was later abandoned in favor of just including the *Dialectica* and the *De Fide*.[44] Kotter and Louth, however, have offered alternative suggestions, which also make sense of the available evidence, and perhaps more so. Louth has persuasively argued that John was in the process of revising the *Dialectica* when he died, and Kotter that he did intend the entire work to consist of all three parts, and appended the dedicatory epistle to the work shortly before his death.[45]

When, however, the treatise on heresies was first composed, has been left open, although Thümmel suggested that it must have predated 726 when Iconoclasm broke out in the empire.[46] This is a reasonable suggestion, as Iconoclasm, to which John devoted three independent treatises refuting, fails to appear in the *De Haeresibus*. John's first treatise against that heresy specifically can be reliably dated to 726–730.[47] It is of course again possible to argue that *De Haeresibus* was written after the outbreak, but that John did not see the need to include it in his heresiology. This would seem odd, however, given his strong opposition to Iconoclsam.[48]

Two other important heresies do not appear in *On Heresies*, and this should raise further suspicions regarding its date. As has already been pointed out,

44 See H. G. Thümmel, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der sogenannten Pege gnoseos des Ioannes von Damaskos', *Bsl* 42 (1981), pp. 20–30.

45 Louth, 'The Pege Gnoseos', pp. 335–40, and Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. II, pp. XXV–XXXVII. Louth observed that earlier scholars had mistakenly interpreted a passage in Theophanes and connected it with John's preface to his work, 'The Fount of Knowledge', in which *On Heresies* is found. Louth's analysis does not preclude the possibility of that date (743). He does, however, defend a later dating for the final revisions of the work on more certain footing than has been done in prior work, but does not speculate on when *On Heresies* itself may have been written.

46 Later scribes would interpolate Iconoclasm as the 102nd heresy in the book. See Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. IV, for the various manuscript recensions.

47 Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises*, p. 10.

48 The three treatises appear in Kotter's critical edition, all of which Louth has translated. See Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. III, and Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises*.

John of Damascus appears to have been aware of major events taking place in the empire, or at least in Constantinople, and he was clearly well-read. But despite this, the heresies of the *Athingani* and the *Paulicians* do not appear in his heresiology. There are conceivable excuses for the omission of these, but these do not appear to hold up to close scrutiny.

To begin with *Paulicianism*, it is generally accepted that this heresy was referred to by Byzantine heresiologists under the rubric of Manichaeism.[49] Epiphanius had already commented on Manichaeism in his heresiology, which was taken over by John.[50] It would seem odd, however, given the increased attention *Pauliciansim* received in the seventh and eighth centuries by the political elites in Constantinople that it should receive no further attention either as its own individual sect, or elaborated on under the Manichaean heresy. Further, given John's increased attention to Manichaeism in a separate work, that he takes no effort to further comment on this apparently new form of Manichaeism in *On Heresies* is odd.[51]

Similarly, the *Athingani*, who appear in the heresiology of Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople (c. 668–c. 740), and were known to Timothy of Constantinople as the Melchisidechians, are absent from John's heresiology.[52] Again, here it might be argued that since Timothy associated them with the Melchisedechians, John may have done likewise, and therefore felt no need to add the *Athingani* to his own heresiology as the Melchisedechians were already included in the *Anacephalaeosis*.[53] However, it seems that by John's time they were important enough of a group to have figured in Germanus' heresiology separately, and this should cause us to think that a serious heresiologist might want them incorporated in his updated list of heresies. When

49 See J. Hamilton and B. Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine world c. 650–c. 1450* (Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 1–5.

50 The Manichaeans appear as sect 66 in Epiphanius' *Panarion.*

51 Chase claimed that John was referring to Paulicianism in his independent treatise against the Manichees. Louth is more cautious, and isn't convinced John had heard of the earliest Paulicians, although admits of the possibility. See F. H. Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings* (Catholic University of America Press, 1958), p. XIX and Louth, *St. John Damascene*, p. 187.

52 On the *Athingani*, see J. Starr, 'An Eastern Christian Sect: The Athinganoi', *HTR* 29.2 (1936), pp. 93–106, I. Rochow, 'Die Häresie der Athinganer im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert und die Frage ihres Fortlebens', in H. Köpstein and F. Winkelmann (eds.), *Studien zum 8. und 9. Jahrhundert in Byzanz* (Akademie-Verlag, 1983), pp. 163–78, and P. Speck, 'Eine Interpolation in den Bilderreden des Johannes von Damaskos', *BZ* 82 (1989), pp. 114–5. The *Athingani* appear in Germanus's work at PG 86.34.

53 Heresy 55, also included in John's work.

Theophanes wrote his chronicle in 813/14, he recalled that the emperor dealt with the group specifically and they were given the death penalty in 811.[54] In any case, the Melchisedechians receive no more than a sentence in the *Anacephalaeosis* and get no further elaboration from John.

The absence of these three heresies should cause us to question both the date and reasons for the composition of the *De Haeresibus*. On the one hand the absence of these implies a date earlier than 726 for the work, as we know John knew of Iconoclasm, and we know it was a major heresy in the empire. The simplest explanation for its absence, and the absence of the other two listed above, is that John arranged his heresiology at a relatively early date in his life, at a time when these heresies were less important than they would become over the course of the eighth century.

On the other hand their absence might be explained by the idea that the *De Haeresibus* was incorporated into *The Fount* for the specific purpose of the inclusion of the 'heresy' of the Ishmaelites, with the aim toward being comprehensive of all belief systems that he could record had come into the world to date. For, the last heresy on the Ishmaelites differs considerably from those that come before it, and those that come immediately before bear some signs of being simple space-holders. The heresy of the Ishmaelites is introduced with the claim that it is the precursor to the Antichrist and is significantly longer than the abbreviated summaries of the heresies that precede it, or, for that matter, any of the others in the book. It might also be argued that reference to the Ishmaelites as the 'forerunner to the Antichrist' indicates a date around the turn of the eighth century, when such Apocalyptic predictions were prevalent in the Levant, and the Muslims were often referred to as 'Antichrists'.[55] The two theories are not mutually exclusive, and in fact partly work to different points. The idea that John included his heresiology in *The Fount* for the sake of achieving a kind of comprehensiveness for the history of heresies will be fully explored in this book, and as I will show, there are good reasons for thinking John wanted to include Islam in such a work, despite clear semantic obstacles for doing so.

Chapters one and two attempt to set John in his historical and theological context, while explaining some of the reasons scholars have found it difficult

54 Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 678.

55 See D. Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Mohr, 1989) for the wide variety of material, and G. J. Reinink, 'Ps.-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam', in A. Cameron and L. I. Conrad (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 149–87.

to understand what led him to the improbably seeming conclusion that Islam was a 'heresy'. Situating John in his historical context and in the theological tradition of heresiological discourse has to be accomplished simultaneously because one cannot understand why he composed his work on Islam at all unless one understands also the theological tradition in which he was working, and where and how he supplemented it or re-expressed it to fit his time and place. For that reason historical conclusions regarding why he may have felt the need to compose his works as he did emerge alongside theological explanations for the terminology he chose to employ. Indeed, in chapter one I show that John's use of the term 'heresy', given how most other Christians before him had used it, is unusual. This is a word whose meaning has received a great deal of attention in modern scholarship, although surprisingly little of that attention has been devoted to the usages of authors working in a period later than the first four centuries of the Christian Church.[56] One regularly encounters scholarship today in which the scholar attributes to John the view that Islam was a 'Christian heresy'.[57] The tendency to read history back through modern eyes often obscures the actual intention of the author himself, and perhaps nowhere in theological studies is this tendency so dangerous as when it comes to the condemnation of other faith systems and so called 'heresies'.

Only in the second half of the book do I attempt to show that we have no clear evidence that John's view of Islam was in any way distortional, or that he invented characterizations of the Ishmaelites that were clearly false. It was necessary to delay such efforts to the second half of the book because John's work, by virtue of appearing in an 'heresiology', immediately elicits the assumption that it shares in a particular kind of discourse about the 'other', and one which sometimes appears to preclude honest assessment of that other to which one has attached the label of 'heresy'. Heresiologists certainly did sometimes distort the beliefs of those on whom they wrote. The reasons they did so varied, but included: attempting to associate them more closely with Christianity in order to convict them more fully of their heresiological status and fit them within the pre-established heresiological framework which they inherited; link them more closely to other heresies in order to discredit them; or link them to pagan philosophies already considered to be in error. Indeed, it has been implied that John may have participated in the practice of inventing heresies (as group characterizations) for most or all of the heresies he added to

56 See R. J. Lyman, 'Heresiology: The Invention of "Heresy" and "Schism"', in A. Casiday and F. W. Norris (eds.), *Constantine to c. 600* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 296–313, with bibliography to recent discussion.

57 Examples will be given in the following pages.

the *Anacephalaeosis* of Epiphanius with only the possible exception of Islam.[58] For the heresies that appear at the end of John's heresiology do not appear in other places, save in the *Doctrina Patrum*, whose own manuscript tradition and authorship, as mentioned above, leaves many unanswered questions.

I attempt to show that John was probably attempting to offer an accurate picture of Islam partly by establishing in chapters one and two areas in which John's independence of the heresiological tradition are apparent, and by further corroborating, as best we can, in chapters three and four his account of Islam. I do this first by showing that, in contrast to earlier scholarship on this topic, we have no good reason to suppose that John was limited in his knowledge of Islam. John's sources for early Islam, while somewhat elusive, have several parallels in other literature contemporary with him, thus corroborating his perspective on early Islam. That to which John witnesses in the Islamic tradition can be found to exist either in the Islamic tradition itself, or in other non-Islamic traditions about Islam apparently independent of John and his sources.

Chapter four deals more narrowly with Islamic and what might be called 'para-Islamic' traditions, and how these traditions are reflected in John's short treatise. Recent developments in the methodology of the study of early Islam have contributed to a larger body of research that makes it possible to see John's work in clearer light. I try to use some of these new methodologies to re-evaluate John's work, and test it against other standards of historical accuracy. Finally, chapter five compares John's work on Islam with his immediate theological successor and oft called spiritual disciple, Theodore Abu Qurrah. An analysis of his work on Islam both reveals John's influences on Theodore, and helps corroborate certain aspects of John's description of early Islam.

A quick survey of a few of the scholars who have looked at this text reveal how important it is that a reassessment of it be carried out as I have tried to do here. Several have taken the view that the information about Islam available to the Damascene was limited, and that he was not well acquainted even with the four *suras* he mentions at the end of his text.[59] Merrill argues this on the basis that the material John cites from the second, third, fourth, and fifth *suras*

58 See A. Louth, 'The Pege Gnoseos of St John Damascene: Its Date and Development', in C. Dendrinos and J. Chrysostomides (eds.), *Porphyrogenita: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (Ashgate, 2003), pp. 335–40, note 19 for the suggestion that the last heresies, if not figments of John's imagination, were at least not "recognizable heretical sects".

59 J. E. Merrill, 'John of Damascus on Islam', *MW* 41.2 (1951), pp. 88–97 and Meyendorff, 'Byzantine View of Islam', p. 118.

does not take into account other information contained in those same *suras*, and so the Damascene would have 'changed the statements and argumentation' of his treatise had he been familiar with those *suras* in their entirety.[60] Meyendorff thought John was significantly more concerned with Iconoclasm, and its threats to the Church in the empire, than he was with Islam. He argues on that basis that John was, "certainly better informed about the events in Constantinople than about Islam." He follows Merrill's analysis of John's understanding of the Qur'an, and argues that there is no "clear evidence that John had, in fact, read the Koran." But Meyendorff and Merrill's whole approach is dictated by the assumption that John was in contact with a normative monolithic Islam which he could read about, and on which he could report to his readers. Meyendorff argues that John's inclusion of (what are now known to be) pre-Islamic beliefs and practices in his description of Islam shows that the Byzantines had only a "casual and superficial acquaintance with Islam." Islamicists have not been much more favorable to John. Montgomery Watt, for example, states that John gives a "somewhat inadequate account of Islam from an objective standpoint", and that he "might have been expected to know more about Islam than in fact he did."[61]

Daniel Sahas in his translation and commentary on the text thinks that John demonstrates a more accurate knowledge of the religion, but predicates his view on the theory that there was a normative Islam to be understood.[62] Sahas writes, "As a conclusion to this chapter we wish to defend the thesis that Chapter 101 of the *On Heresies* is an early systematic introduction to Islam written by a Christian writer. Its purpose was to inform the Christians of the newly-appeared 'heresy' and to provide some preliminary answers to its 'heretical' elements."[63] In the same way, he writes, "… he is aware of the cardinal doctrines and concepts in Islam, especially those which are of immediate interest to a Christian."[64] The idea that John could write a 'systematic introduction' to Islam, and be aware of the 'cardinal doctrines and concepts in Islam' requires a perspective of Islam in the eighth century that has increasingly come under question in more recent times. Sahas' study sought to refute the claims made by earlier scholars that John understood little of the religion of Islam, but he

60 Merrill, 'John of Damascus on Islam', pp. 96–97.

61 W. M. Watt, *Muslim-Christian Encounters: Perceptions and Misperceptions* (Routledge, 1991), pp. 70–72.

62 Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 95, and later D. J. Sahas, 'Cultural Interaction during the Umayyad Period: the "Circle" of John of Damascus', *Aram* 6 (1994), pp. 35–66.

63 Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 94.

64 Ibid.

has in common with his predecessors the fallacy that John's understanding can be assessed on the basis of his text and a comparison of it to the Islam that we know today. As I highlight below in chapter four, serious questions regarding Islam's origins and how the new faith developed have been asked since Sahas wrote his work, and these have a direct impact on how we might view the accuracy of John's work.

Other recent studies of the text have sometimes asked anachronistic questions of the treatise. Raymond Le Coz, for example, suggests that John was unaware of the five pillars of Islam, according to him a critical aspect of what it meant to be part of the Islamic community.[65] But it is clear from the recent work done in the field of early Islam that the five pillars are a development within Islam that post-dated the life of the Damascene.[66] Le Coz shows no apparent awareness of the contemporary scholarly debates on the origins of Islam, and the body of secondary source material he draws on to write his commentary is devoid of any of the revisionist scholars I mentioned above and discuss in chapter four. Like his predecessors, Le Coz takes for granted an Islam developed and a Qur'an codified and a canonical copy available to John by the time he writes, leading essentially to the same type of analysis made by Sahas, which bases how much John knew of Islam on effectively what we know of Islam today.[67]

Of the contemporary scholars who have commented on this text Andrew Louth has come closest to supporting the view that John's treatise on Islam tells us all that might be expected about Islam at the time and place John was writing. But he sides with earlier writers in saying that John lacked a precise knowledge of the Qur'an and that John's replies, 'seem to reveal some misunderstanding of Muslim practice.'[68] Louth's interest in the treatise on Islam is limited, however, and he does not extend his views greatly. It is clear from a deeper analysis of the text in *On Heresies*, in conjunction with a study of the recent scholarship done in the field of early Islamic studies, that John's

65 Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam*, p. 133.

66 See C. Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik* (Oneworld Publications, 2005), p. 12, arguing that only three things were central to early Islamic practice; declaring God's oneness, acknowledging Muhammad's prophecy, and signaling this acknowledgment by paying a tribute of one kind or another to him or one of his representatives. The earliest attestation of the five pillars dates to the early ninth century, long after John wrote his treatise. This will be addressed further below, in chapter three.

67 See Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam*, pp. 23–40 and 100–33, for Le Coz's brief discussion of the political and religious situation during John's lifetime, and the nature of the Qur'an on which he assumes John is commenting.

68 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 80–81.

perspective on Islam has been misunderstood and misevaluated. It is for this reason that chapter four is a necessary addition to the scholarship on John's work. Indeed, the Damascene has much to say about early Islam, and the text should be considered from a stand-point that is free of presumptions regarding either a normative Islam when John was writing, or a contemporary orthodox Islam projected back onto the Damascene's writing. It is my hope that in the following pages I am able offer such an appraisal.

CHAPTER 1

Heresy and Heresiology in Late Antiquity

Since the time when I first began investigating John of Damascus and his work on Islam, I am unable to count the number of times I have been asked if John of Damascus really thought Islam was a Christian heresy. I have lost all ability to answer succinctly. This is because the answer is really, 'yes' and 'no'. While the 'yes' is relatively easy to explain superficially (John included his work on Islam in a book on heresies), such an explanation is deeply unsatisfactory, not to say confusing. It is certainly surprising that John included a chapter on the Ishmaelites in his heresiology, as he is nearly alone in doing so among heresiologists, either before or after him. Despite apparent awareness of the Ishmaelites as a distinct group in antiquity, church historians did not include them in their heresiologies.[1] Further, subsequent to appearing in John's work, the Ishmaelites rarely appear in collections against heresies. When they did, historians sometimes sought to distance themselves from attributing the word *hairesis* to Islam, preferring alternative terminology. Where authors have made direct use of the Damascene's treatise, they sometimes go so far as to re-title the work. This was the case with Nicetas Choniates (c. 1155–1215), who, while incorporating a substantial section of John's work on Islam into his own description of the faith, removed this material from John's heresiology and referred to it as the "θρησκεία τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν" or the "Practices [worship, superstition?] of the Hagarenes".[2] To my knowledge, no one has yet undertaken a systematic study of the meaning of the word 'θρησκεία', but it is generally acknowledged that the ancient use referred more closely to practices, or rites of worship rather than a school of thought or system of beliefs, and if it has changed in Nicetas' use, it may have a tendency to be derogatory so that the rendering 'superstition' may be more appropriate.[3] While references after John to Islam as a heresy are

1 This may be partly because of the recognition that was expressed in at least some circles that one could be both a 'Saracen' or 'Ishmaelite', and a Christian. See, for example, *The Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret, The Lives of the Saints* by Cyril of Scythopolis, or the Chronicle of John Malalas, all of which provide examples of this.

2 See PG 140.105, where the full subheading of the text is: Περὶ τῆς θρησκεία τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν.

3 There was no concept of 'religion' as we have today in the ancient or Byzantine period. See E. A. Judge, 'Group Religions in the Roman Empire', *JAC* 51 (2008), pp. 188–95. For the later period, see D. J. Sahas, 'The Notion of "Religion" with reference to Islam in Byzantine anti-Islamic Literature', in Bianchi, U. (ed.), *The Notion of Religion in Comparative Research* (Rome, 1990), 523–30, who argues that religion for the Byzantines was a 'they' and not a system of

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_003

plentiful, and so the tradition of understanding Islam in such terms is present, such references are usually found in independent refutations of the Qurʾan or Muhammad specifically.[4] They do, moreover, often include an interlocutor, a feature already present in John's work, but usually absent from earlier descriptions of heresies.

Neither does it seem that John's contemporaries viewed Islam as a heresy. Theodore Bar Koni, who authored a Syriac heresiology completed around 792, preferred to keep his polemical treatise against the Ishmaelites out of his book on heresies. Instead, he devoted a separate book to the Ishmaelites in his work the *Book of the Scholion*. He even goes so far as to explicitly identify his Muslim interlocutors as pagans:

> Il m'est apparu maintenant de joindre à ce livre, ce *mimra* dont le titre est plus haut, car j'ai pensé que le profit qui en résulterait ne serait pas mince surtout qu'on voit son dessein se tenir à une voie autre que celle d'une recherche contre l'hérésie. Bien qu'il soit rempli de critique contre le païens (*hanpe*) et de confirmation de [notre] foi, nous l'avons cependant mis (en forme de) question, selon notre coutume de tout le livre; c.-à.-d. que pour le païens (nous avons mis) *Scholie*, et pour les chrétiens *Docteur*.[5]

Theodore Abu Qurrah, John's immediate theological successor in Palestine, similarly refrained from using the term to refer to Islam.[6] The patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople (806–13) did not include them in his heresiology. Thus, Muslims were regularly referred to as pagans in the Christian literature of John's period and after, as numerous texts witness.[7] An explanation of

---

belief or faith evaluation. Theodore Abu Qurra, John's immediate theological successor, and about whom chapter five below is devoted, seems to have understood θρησκεία as something handed down from father to son. In this sense, 'set of practices' or even 'tradition' may be closer to an English approximation. See Opus 19 of Theodore's works against the Saracens at R. Glei and A.-T. Khoury, (eds.), *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurra. Schriften zum Islam* (Echter, 1995), pp. 94–95.

4 See the descriptions of these works in A.-T. Khoury, *Les Théologiens byzantins et l'Islam: Textes et auteurs* (*VIII*ᵉ*–XIII*ᵉ *S.*) (2nd edn., Nauwelaerts, 1969).

5 R. Hespel and R. Draguet (trans.), *Théodore Bar Koni: Livre des Scholies* (*recension de Séert*) (Peeters, 1982), p. 172.

6 This will be discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

7 Sophronius of Jerusalem in his homilies written at the end of the seventh century, the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius written at the same time, and Armenian History attributed to Sebeos are all examples of this. See the still useful W. E. Kaegi, Jr., 'Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest', *ChH* 38.2 (1969), pp. 139–49. Of course the terms were not

how it happened that John could stand out among these and treat Islam as a heresy that could be enumerated alongside other heresies such as Arianism and Monotheletism would thus greatly contribute to our understanding both of Christian heresiological practice and early Christian views of Islam.

Problems in Associating Islam with Heresy

A very particular view of what constituted heresy for the late antique Christian has developed in modern scholarship and this view has made the question people have put to me above regarding John and how he saw Islam perfectly reasonable. Discussion of what constituted heresy in the late antique world is dominated by interest in the Christian conception of heresy in the first five centuries after Christ, with some attention paid to classical precedents. The typical view of heresy, now well established, is summarized by Alistair McGrath in his recent book:

> So what is the characteristic feature of heresy, distinguishing it from other variants of Christianity? By the fourth century, the term "heresy" was generally being used regularly to designate a teaching that emerges from within the community of faith on the one hand yet is ultimately destructive of that faith on the other. The central defining paradox of heresy is that it is *not unbelief*; it is rather a vulnerable and fragile form of Christianity that proves incapable of sustaining itself in the long term.…
>
> Heresy is thus to be understood to refer to an intellectually defective vision of the Christian faith, having its origins within the church.[8]

McGrath is not alone in this assessment. Scholars of history, theology and sociology all work with a definition of heresy which presupposes that the heretic has a direct relationship with the community characterizing the heretic. To a certain extent this has historically been the case. At least it is clearly a view that has been held of heresy by several early churchmen.[9] Although some

always mutually exclusive, and some authors could refer to Islam both as paganism and heresy. See N. Bulst and J. France (eds.), *Rodulphi Glabri Historiarum libri quinque = Rodolfus Glaber: The Five Books of the Histories* (Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 21–23, for the earliest example of how Latin authors similarly viewed Muslims as Pagans.

8 A. E. Mcgrath, *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth* (SPCK Publishing, 2009), p. 83.

9 Origen and Augustine are among those who made explicit statements to this effect. See below.

recent scholars have attempted to point out that early Christian understanding of what constituted heresy varied, even some of those who have participated in proving this point have preferred to see variations in perspective coming to an end by the end of the third century.[10] Thus, after seeing how contemporary scholars have characterized heresy as they have, I will proceed through some of the reasons for the views they hold, before entering into a discussion of John and his application of the term to Islam.

If we begin with contemporary sociologists, who are perhaps farthest removed from the study of heresy in Christian history, perhaps we can most easily understand the confusion others have expressed as to how John could fit Islam into a heresiological frame. After summarizing all recent discussions on the nature of heresy by sociologists, Jacques Berlinerblau notes, "Insofar as all [sociologists] agree that a heretic is an insider, a major task for the sociology of heresy consists of advancing a more precise conception of insider status."[11] While furthering his objective, Berlinerblau concludes his article by assessing what the heretic is in essence: "A designation conferred upon a person who, in the eyes of an orthodoxy, has swerved from its 'natural' conception of the world. This individual's deviation is rendered more alarming by the fact that he or she is perceived to be a member of the group."[12] Berlinerblau takes for granted that the heretic is by definition someone who comes from within the orthodoxy that now characterizes him as deviant.

Historians and theologians of Christianity, although more well informed on the origins of heresy, similarly work with the notion that heresy was understood in the first centuries of the Christian Church only vis-à-vis an orthodoxy from which the heretic originated. As Henry Chadwick has stated:

> Before Constantine's time ecclesiastical writers had come to see that some affirmations were more central than others; that there are areas where dissent can be without prejudice to these central affirmations; moreover, that one must distinguish between a heresy and a mistake.

10 So Simon, who ends his article on the development of the concept of heresy by stating that, "In the end it is the apostolicity that is the infallible criterion of the truth as it was conceived by the whole ancient church as well as by Tertullian." M. Simon, 'From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy', in W. R. Schoedel and R. L. Wilken (eds.), *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition* (Editions Beauchesne, 1979), pp. 101–16, p. 116.

11 J. Berlinerblau, 'Toward a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy, and Doxa', *History of Religions*, 40.4 (2001), pp. 327–51, p. 336.

12 Berlinerblau, 'Toward a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy, and Doxa', p. 351.

> Strictly, no one could properly be deemed a heretic unless he or she was a baptized believer.[13]

Chadwick, like Berlinerblau, assumes that in order to fulfill the criteria for heresy, one had to come to his heresy from within the folds of the Church, having been baptized, and received into 'insider' status.

Common definitions of heresy in modern encyclopedias and dictionaries of religion and Christianity have sought to define heresy likewise. "Heresy is one of several conditions labeled by the church as hazardous. Schism, apostasy, and belief in another religion or in no religion are others. Heretics, apostates, and schismatics are more closely related to the church than others, for they had at one time been insiders. Heretics still consider themselves insiders, although the church rejects them for having willfully rejected some essential element of faith."[14] The idea that the heretic was once a member of the faithful is thus firmly rooted in modern scholarship across disciplines, and although there are some voices who witness to authors who worked with alternative understandings, which will be discussed further below, these are silenced by the multitude of voices testifying otherwise.[15]

The view that heresy begins within the Church is not without merit, and certainly appears in a variety of our early sources. Origen, for example, wrote: "All heretics at first are believers; then later they swerve from the rule of faith."[16] Lactantius (c. 240–c. 320) wrote that, heretics were of three types: those who desired high office in the Church and withdrew when they failed to obtain it; those who were led astray from the Church by false arguments and perversions of the truth; those who were enticed by the predictions of false

13 H. Chadwick, 'Orthodoxy and Heresy from the Death of Constantine to the Eve of the First Council of Ephesus', in A. Cameron and P. Garnsey (eds.), *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 562–80, pp. 561–2.

14 T. A. Robinson, 'Heresy: Christian Concepts', in L. Jones (ed.), *ER* (6; Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 3925–30.

15 Other works dedicated to the treatment of heresy apart from McGrath's given above, and which do so in a similar way are W. Nigg, *Das Buch der Ketzer* (Artemis Verlag, 1949), trans. as W. Nigg, *The Heretics: Heresy Through the Ages* (Dorset Press, 1962) and H. O. J. Brown, *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church* (Hendrickson, 1988), and, most crucially, A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque: iie–iiie siècles I* (Etudes augustiniennes, 1985), which will be dealt with in more detail below.

16 R. P. Lawson (trans.), *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies* (Newman Press, 1957), 3 (Canticle 2.2).

prophets.[17] Basil of Caesarea tried to distinguish between the different meanings and uses of words that might be confused with heresy. He wrote in a letter to Amphilochius, which would later be incorporated into the body of Church Canons that, "By heresies they meant men who were altogether broken off and alienated in matters relating to the actual faith; by *schisms* men who had separated for some ecclesiastical reasons and questions capable of mutual solution; by *unlawful congregations* gatherings held by uninstructed laymen."[18] Similar views to these were expressed in both the Latin and Greek thought worlds, by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons (d. c. 202), Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 263–339), and Augustine of Hippo (354–430).[19]

Perhaps the main reason scholars have drifted toward this understanding of heresy to the apparent exclusion of other understandings, however, is due to Augustine of Hippo and the influence his heresiology exerted on future generations. Augustine used two principal sources for constructing his heresiology, Epiphanius of Salamis' *Panarion* or 'Medicine Chest', and Philaster of Brescia's (d. c. 397) *Diversarum Haereseon Liber* or 'Book of Various Heresies'.[20] Although both of these manuals on heresy included pre-Christian groups, Augustine removed these, choosing to start his heresiology with Simon Magus, the first identifiable figure to depart from Christ, who already by Augustine's time had become the starting point for other heresiologies.[21] Further, Augustine himself said several things that indicate he would not have considered such pre-Christian groups as heretical, on the very basis that they could not have been in a position to reject Christ willfully, and thus move from 'insider' to 'outsider'

17 A. Bowen and P. Garnsey (eds.), *Lactantius: Divine Institutes* (Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 279–80 (4.30).

18 R. J. Deferrari and M. R. P. Mcguire (eds.), *Saint Basil: The Letters* 4 vols. (Harvard University Press, 1950), vol. III, letter 188.1.

19 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* II 13.6 (136,8f. S.), cf. Justin Martyr, 1st Apology 56; Irenaeus., *Against Heresies* I 23.2. See also A. Ferreiro, *Simon Magus in Patristic, Medieval, and Early Modern Traditions* (Brill, 2005), p. 88 for the unfortunately erroneous view that, "The Church Fathers unanimously taught that Simon Magus is the spiritual father of all heresy."

20 Teske (ed.), *Arianism and Other Heresies by Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 17–19. It is perhaps useful to mention here, that Augustine probably accessed the *Panarion* in its summary form, the *Anacephalaeosis*.

21 Irenaeus of Lyons characterized Simon Magus as father of all Gnostic sects (*Adversus Haereses*, 1.2). Jerome referred to him as the "perpetrator of all heresies". See A. Ferreiro, 'Jerome's Polemic against Priscillian in his Letter to Ctesiphon (133, 4)', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 39.2 (1993), pp. 309–32. For the tradition of the succession of heresies from master to disciple, see Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 81–83.

status. Most explicitly, he states in his commentary on Matthew that heretics are those who, "having been born from the seed of the gospel and the name of Christ, are converted to false doctrine by evil opinions."[22] In a letter written to Quodvultdeus he wrote that the children of heretics should not be considered heretics because their participation in heresy was, "not the fruit of their audacious presumption, but of the inheritance they have received".[23]

Manichaeism: The Exception that Proves the Rule

One seeming exception to this view of heresy is that of Manichaeism. On the face of it, it would seem difficult to believe that anyone in the ancient world thought that Mani and his earliest followers were at first Christians before they broke off from Christianity to form their own sect. After all, Mani came from Persia, and the earliest treatises we have written against him do not portray him as having been a Christian prior to developing his own religion.[24] It is thus somewhat surprising that Manichaeism's very presence in virtually every Christian heresiology written after his time has not caused more to stop and reflect on whether the paradigm espoused above needs adjustment.

However, the Manichaeans portrayed themselves as the true heirs of Jesus Christ and the representatives of authentic Christianity, and attempted to claim the exclusive rights to universal truth in several ways. First, they co-opted the names and ways Christians used to refer to themselves, making themselves appear very similar to the Church recognized by the imperial authorities, and which dated itself from the time of the Apostles.[25] Secondly, Mani and his followers claimed Christ played an important part in salvation. These helped

22 Augustine, *Quaestiones XVI in Matthaeum*, LCSL 44B, 11.1.

23 R. B. Eno (trans.), *St. Augustine: Letters* (Catholic University of America Press, 1951) (letters 222.2 and 43.1).

24 The *Acta Archelai* are the earliest documents we have of Christian polemics against Mani. They appear to date from the first quarter of the fourth century at the latest, and were written a certain Hegemonius, about whom we know nearly nothing. See Hegemonius, K. Kaatz et al., *Acta Archelai:* (*The Acts of Archelaus*) (Brepols, 2001), and the collection of papers in J. Beduhn and P. A. Mirecki (eds.), *Frontiers of Faith: The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus* (Brill, 2007).

25 Manicheans in the Latin west appear to have used the name 'Christian' to refer to themselves, sometimes calling their opponents 'semi-Christians'. In the Greek east, they used the term ἐκκλησία to refer to their assemblies, as did Christians. See N. C. Lieu Samuel, 'The Self-identity of the Manichaeans in the Roman East', *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998), pp. 205–28.

bring his belief system deeper into the *Gedankenwelt* of 'heresy' and away from perceptions of it as a independent form of paganism or other system, making it easy for Christians to identify it as heresy and his followers as heretics.[26]

These attributes of Manichaeism further made the group very dangerous to the established Church, and finally enshrined it among the ranks of lists of heresies. Their portrayal as 'heretics' may also be seen partly as a function of their condemnation and banishment by the ruling political authorities, which preceded the Christian identification of Manichaeism as 'heresy'. For, it was not until after Diocletian outlawed Manichaeism in 302 that Christians begin to write of Manichaeism as a heresy, beginning with Eusebius.[27] That Diocletian himself had labeled the group as a heresy was later added and promulgated by Christians such as we find in Ambrosiaster.[28] Interestingly, some evidence suggests that perhaps there was a kind of hesitation on the part of some to view Manichaeism as heresy. Augustine often treated the Manichaeans as a separate group in his polemical works, and imperial legislation regularly treated the Manicheans as a separate group when condemning heretics.[29]

Finally, in the east, the myth that Mani was himself originally a Christian who apostasized from the faith grew and facilitated satisfaction of the model above that a heretic was first a believer, who later swerved from the rule of faith. The *Maronite Chronicle* and the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian depict Mani as someone who began his career as a Christian priest in Persia before leaving to found his own heretical sect. From there he is said to have sent out his pupils to *Beth Aramaye* and India.[30] Thus Manichaeism is in many senses

26 S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East* (Brill, 1994), pp. 179–80.

27 J. K. Coyle, *Manichaeism and its Legacy* (Brill, 2009), pp. 13–18.

28 *Ad Timotheum secunda* 3.7.2, (CSEL 81/3, p. 3112.18–20).

29 Although using the term 'heresy' to refer to it, Augustine several times treated the faith in a separate category. See Coyle, *Manichaeism and its Legacy*, for references. Also see F. Decret, 'Saint Augustin, témoin du manichéisme dans l'Afrique romaine', in C. Mayer and K. H. Chelius (eds.), *Internationales Symposion über den Stand der Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), pp. 87–97.

30 *Chronicon Maroniticum* (MS of the 8/9 century) ed. by Brooks, *Chronica minora*, 1.2: 58–60, Latin translation in part 2 of *Chronica minora* (CSCO, Scriptores Syri, series 3, vol. 4, 1903), p. 47 and in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian (ed. Chabot, vol. 1; pp. 198–201), French translation in (ed. J. B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, pp. 183–86. According to Epiphanius, however, Mani only deceitfully passes himself off as a Christian. See Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, p. 225. See also W. Klein, 'War Main Priester der Perserkirche?' in A. V. Tongerloo and L. Cirillo (eds.), *Atti del terzo Congresso internazionale di studi "Manicheismo e oriente cristiano antico", Arcavata di Rende, Amantea, 31 agosto–5 settembre 1993* (Brepols, 1997).

the 'exception that proves the rule' that heretics were perceived as those who began their careers in the Church. Technically speaking, however, scholarship in the field of heresy and heresiology has not been quite as nuanced and accurate as we might like, and there were in fact other ways to achieve the label of 'heresy' in both the early part of the Church's history, and when John wrote his work.

Heresy as Opposition to the Church

Willful departure from Christ was not the only way one could attract the label of heresy in the early church, as already alluded to in the presence of pre-Christian groups in the heresiologies of Philaster and Epiphanius. Part of the reason it was important to see error as having postdated truth was a result of the commonly held notion in antiquity that the older a thought was, the better it was, a concept defined as 'Primitivism'.[31] If one could show that one's thought system or beliefs were anterior to another, that helped in discrediting the other as a new invention, untested by time, and inferior to the great ideologies already established. This tendency was firmly rooted in Hellenistic thought, and posed a certain problem to Christian heresiologists: how, if Christ had only come a few hundred years ago, could the faith he established supersede that of other systems in existence prior to him?

Thus, it might here be raised that another exception to the rule of departure from Christ as the criterion of heresy might obviously be found in those authors who included in their heresiologies heresies that pre-date Christ and his coming, such as Judaism. As I said above, both Hegesippus and Epiphanius of Salamis characterized pre-Christian groups in their heresiologies.[32] Yet on closer inspection both of these authors fill the criteria for being a party to the truth prior to error. Hegesippus managed this by considering only those groups which were contemporary with Christ and so could be viewed as directly opposed to him, regardless of their prior origination. This made it possible to see them as Christian heresies.[33] Eusebius, quoting the lost text of Hegesippus,

31 See A. O. Lovejoy, G. Boas et al., *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) for an explanation of Primitivism and Anti-Primitivism as theories of cultural development in antiquity.

32 The work of Hegesippus is now lost, but we know of some of it through Eusebius of Caesarea and his Ecclesiastical History.

33 H. Inglebert, 'L'histoire des hérésies chez les hérésiologues', in B. Pouderon and Y.-M. Duval (eds.), *L'historiographie de l'Église des premiers siècles* (Beauchesne, 2001), pp. 105–25.

writes, "The same writer also describes the sects [heresies] which once existed among the Jews, as follows: 'Now there were various opinions among the circumcision, among the children of Israel, against the tribe of Judah and the Messiah, as follows: Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbothæans, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees.'"[34] Hegesippus' claim that these groups were opposed to Christ allowed him to paint Jewish groups contemporary to Christ with the brush of heresy. It remains unclear, however, whether Hegesippus would have considered these groups as heretical prior to the coming of Christ.

Epiphanius, on the other hand, accomplished the goal by pushing back the origins of the Church to coincide with the origins of man. Epiphanius' schema for heresy similarly allows him to fit the definition that Christianity at least was prior to heresy. For him, a combination of factors allows him to conclude that Old Testament figures and movements could be referred to as heresy:

> Anyone who is willing < to make an > impartial < investigation can > see, from the very object of it, < that > the holy catholic church is the beginning of everything. Adam, < the > man who was formed at the first, was not formed with a body circumcised, but uncircumcised. He was no idolater, and he knew the Father as God, and the Son and Holy Spirit, for he was a prophet. Without circumcision he was no Jew and since he did not worship carved images or anything else, he was no idolater. For Adam < was > a prophet, and knew that the Father had said, "Let us make man," to the Son. What was he, then, since he was neither circumcised nor an idolater—except that he exhibited the character of Christianity? And we must take this to be the case of Abel, Seth, Enosh, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah and Eber, down to Abraham.[35]

Thus, while both Hegesippus and Epiphanius included pre-Christian groups in their conception of heresy, both nonetheless managed to consider the establishment of the Truth to pre-date heresy chronologically.[36] Epiphanius' particular categorization of heresy as a universal phenomenon, going beyond the bounds of rejection of Christ, however, is significant, and as we have already

34 K. Lake (ed.), *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History* (Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 376–77 (4.22.6).

35 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 15.

36 For more on Epiphanius unique use of heresiology, see J. Schott, 'Heresiology as Universal History in Epiphanius's Panarion', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*, 10.3 (2007), pp. 546–63.

seen, he was not followed in this by Augustine, nor would he be by the large majority of future heresiologists.

The tradition of including pre-Christian groups in heresiologies, although not unique to Epiphanius and Hegesippus, represents a far weaker heresiological tradition than that which assumed the beginning of heresy was to be found in Simon Magus. Of the more than thirty heresiological collections from the second to the eighth centuries I have examined, only six of these contain listings of pre-Christian groups, and only three of these lists date from after the fourth century.[37] Additionally, most of these heresiologies, such as that of Hegesippus, Pseudo-Tertullian, Hippolytus, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, limit themselves to non-Christian groups that were in existence at the time of Christ.[38] Thus, even if the group in question had existed prior to Christ's birth, the *reason* they were seen as 'heretical' was because of their opposition to Christ. I am aware of no Christian heresiologist prior to John of Damascus, apart from Epiphanius, who incorporated Hellenic philosophies into his Heresiology, a point to which we will need to return later.[39]

An important exception to this picture of heresy seen above is that in the writings of many of these early churchmen at least the founder of a heresy could derive from another heresy, which would mean that although he was not originally a believer, he came from someone who once had been.[40] Such genealogical linking of one heresy to another was common, and served the heresiologist's purpose in refuting deviant beliefs that might only be narrowly

37 I realize the term 'heresiological collections' is a bit nebulous, but at the present state of scholarship no agreed terminology has been set for speaking about collections of lists of heresies, what kind of content such lists should contain to be considered 'heresiology', and in general what defines the term. For purpose of this book, I will use the term to refer to any collection of lists at all, whether supplied with a great deal of additional content, as is the case in Epiphanius' *Panarion* or without any, as in the case with Sophronius of Jerusalem's synodical letter.

38 Inglebert, 'L'histoire des hérésies', p. 115.

39 A possible exception to this might be found in the text of Ps. Josipus, who was heavily influenced by the *Panarion* or its summary, called by its modern editors, *Joseph's Bible Notes*. This unusual text, whose sole witness is a tenth-century manuscript, briefly lists a group of 'sects' among the Greeks following the listing and description of heresies that left the Church, and Jewish heresies. He does little more than list them, however, and the text offers little additional detail as to Joseph's methodology. It is therefore difficult to tell exactly what Joseph had in mind in composing his lists. See R. M. Grant and G. W. Menzies (eds.), *Joseph's Bible notes = Hypomnestikon* (Scholars Press, 1996).

40 This is explained and expanded on in Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 81–83.

related to Christianity, by showing that one heresy proceeded from another.[41] Whether or not this exception applied to further adherents of the heresy in question is more difficult to say. One would think that it would, although as seen above with Augustine blamelessness with regard to the charge of being a heretic could be achieved if it were perceived that one did not choose one's heresy, but was born into it. This might similarly imply that someone who chose a heresy that was only descended from another heresy might conceivably escape the charge. At what point genealogical descent from a primordial heresy was no longer considered heresy has not been studied, and is part of current scholarly efforts.[42]

Given this view of heresy, it is easy to see why scholars puzzle over John of Damascus' inclusion of Islam in his list of heresies. It would not appear from anything we have seen thus far that either modern scholars, or early churchmen, would likely understand how John could view the Ishmaelites in such terms. Although it has been suggested that inherent in this inclusion is that John thought Islam sprang from within the Christian Church, I will not spend time here refuting such a point. It is more than obvious from John's text itself that he did not consider Islam to have originated within the Church, or Muhammad to have been a Christian in his earlier life.[43] We have no evidence to suggest that the Ishmaelites represented themselves as Christians, or that John thought Muhammad was either a Christian or took his ideas from someone who had been.[44] The closest we can come to satisfying any of the above

41 This led to a process of categorizing heresies into families, where sometimes one founder of a heresy could be seen as the father of that family of heresies. Examples of this can be seen in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* 7.17.108, and Hippolytus' *Elenchos* where heresies are assigned to specific groupings. See the introduction in J. Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' "Elenchos" as a Source for Greek Philosophy* (Brill, 1992).

42 This may be in part because, as I shall show in a moment, such disparate views of what could constitute 'heresy' in our authors would partially confound establishing the boundaries of any definition. Further, heresiologists would often link a contemporary heresy with one of the distant past, instead of with a recent heresy, making such genealogical succession obviously pedagogical, rather than historical. For example, Iconoclasts were regularly accused of stemming from Arianism, despite appearing several centuries after that movement ended. See D. M. Gwynn, 'From Iconoclasm to Arianism: The Construction of Christian Tradition in the Iconoclast Controversy', *GRBS* 47 (2007), pp. 225–51.

43 For the implication that previous scholars have thought so, see N. Q. King, 'S. Joannis Damasceni De haeresibus cap. CI and Islam', *StPatr* 8 (1963), pp. 76–81, where he defends the view that Muhammad did not have the choice of Orthodox Christianity in front of him to reject, and could therefore not be considered a heretic.

44 Stories did circulate that Muhammad learned of Christianity through heretical forms of Christianity, on which see more below in chapter three. Donner has recently argued

qualifications for heresy is John's brief reference to the idea that Muhammad may have learned what he knew of Christianity from a "seemingly Arian (ὁμοίως ἀρειανῷ) monk".[45] This tradition, which may or may not refer to the monk Bahira, and will be addressed further below, nevertheless offers very limited evidence for any view that John conceived of Islam in the terms described above. The theme of false succession, so crucial to early Christian heresiologists, barely receives lip service in John's treatment of the Ishmaelites. While Muhammad is said to have met a 'seemingly Arian monk', John attaches no particular significance to this claim, and he certainly makes no effort to situate Muhammad in the context of a false succession more closely related to him chronologically. Kotter has shown that while later manuscripts attributed Ishmaelite theology to contact with Nestorianism and other heresies (a far more plausible possibility), the earliest recensions of the text did not do so.[46]

Thus, while Epiphanius' model does provide us with a window for additional possibilities, his view is still confined to the perspective that in order to be a heretic, one first had to either come from the Church, or at least be descendent from someone who had. This view persisted throughout the history of Christianity, and with very few exceptions was integrated into the corpus of Christian heresiological collections.

Other Understandings of Heresy in Late Antiquity

The application of the word 'heresy' in categorical discourse began prior to the coming of Christ, and continued to be used in non-Christian contexts for sometime following the adoption of it as a format for Christians to categorize heterodox groups negatively, and this fact has not received much attention.[47]

that it is likely the earliest Muslims did not see themselves as 'Muslims' *per se*, but rather members of a 'believers movement'. This reinterpretation of the origins of early Islam may mean that the earliest Muslims attached themselves to already present synagogues and churches in the Jewish and Christian communities. This plausible and provocative thesis, however, does not presume to extend such practices into John's period, and so does not require further attention here. See F. M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010) and F. Donner, 'From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-Identity in the Early Islamic Community', *Al-Abhath*, 50–51 (2002–03), pp. 9–53 for a useful précis of the main content of the idea.

45 Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. IV, p. 60, ln. 12.

46 Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. IV, p. 60.

47 It has also been argued that heresy as a theological phenomenon appears in all major world religions. See Henderson, *Construction of Orthodoxy*, pp. 3–8.

According to von Staden, among its earliest uses was in Alexandrian medical schools to characterize a group which had "fairly distinctive and coherent theories", and had a group leader or leaders who could articulate their own alternatives to pre-existing theories of medicine.[48] Beginning as early as the second century BC the term *hairesis* began to appear in non-medical literature as well, principally to describe philosophical schools of thought that were doctrinally distinctive. It was not until the first century BC, however, that it would be used to describe institutional schools as well, and then again mainly within a philosophical context.[49] Here Glucker has pointed out that membership of a *hairesis* required a certain level of loyalty of the members to the founder of the school.[50]

Given the above, there could be good or bad heresies, depending on the view of the speaker, and throughout this period the word could simply mean 'choice', and later 'school of thought', but carried no value judgment.[51] Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century, used the term in order to categorize the different sects of Judaism present at his time, identifying himself with the *hairesis* of the Pharisees.[52] Philo, who unfortunately only uses the term four times at most, appears to use it neutrally as well, to refer to philosophical schools.[53]

48 H. v. Staden, 'Hairesis and Heresy: The Case of the haireseis iatrikai', in B. F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (SCM Press, 1982), pp. 76–100.

49 J. Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), pp. 180–81.

50 See J. Glucker, 'Cicero's Philosophical Affiliations', in J. M. Dillon and A. A. Long (eds.), *The Question of "Eclecticism": Studies in later Greek Philosophy* (University of California Press, 1996), pp. 34–69, at 34–36, and D. T. Runia, 'Philo of Alexandria and the Greek Hairesis-Model', *VC* 53.2 (1999), pp. 117–47, p. 123.

51 Cf. Simon, 'Early Christian Literature', p. 104. See also the valuable contribution of von Staden, where he identifies several instances of early Christian authors who use the term positively. He does not, however, examine any instances later than the fourth century to see how the term was being used after that time, but focuses on how it was first used to refer to groups and schools of thought, rather than individual choice or persuasion. Staden, 'Hairesis and Heresy', pp. 96–100. John Glucker describes the word's development, beginning with its verbal form in the third century BCE. See Glucker, *Antiochus*, pp. 166–92.

52 W. Whiston (trans.), *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (New updated edn. Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 13.5.9.

53 Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 39–40. Runia claims that Philo actually does use the term negatively in the one passage Le Boulluec does not cite. The passage is found in a fragment, with little additional context, and the conclusions Runia draws from it are suspect. See Runia, 'Philo of Alexandria and the Greek Hairesis-Model', p. 126 for the view that Philo uses *hairesis* pejoratively. See D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of*

The noun is used in this way several times in the New Testament, referring to the Sadducees and Pharisees,[54] but also on occasion with reference to Christians.[55] The best translation in these contexts is perhaps 'sect'. It is often transliterated into English as the word 'heresy', but when this occurs it is almost always understood in a negative sense, as a deviation from a given truth, and not as one possible choice of differing opinions.[56] In this way it is easy to see how one might speak of a 'Christian heresy' in English, but as far as I am aware, this kind of use appears nowhere in Greek.[57]

Judaeo-Christianity (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 230, n. 9, for the view that Runia fails to prove the point, with which view I am in agreement.

54 The Sadducees are referred to at Acts 5:17 and the Pharisees at 15:5. (All biblical references and translations will be taken from the King James Version).

55 Acts 24:5 has 'τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἱρέσεως', where the Nazarenes are Christians.

56 All major English dictionaries testify to this. Indeed, this is the meaning that seems to have passed into the German theological thought world as well. Walter Bauer, in his discussion of the early church authorities, writes, "There is scarcely the faintest notion anywhere that unbelief might be changed directly into wrong belief. No, where there is heresy, orthodoxy must have preceded. For example, Origen puts it like this: 'All heretics at first are believers; then later they swerve from the rule of faith.'" See Bauer, Kraft, and Krodel, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, p. xxiii.

57 When the word appears in Greek connoting some deviation (most often from Christianity), it is usually accompanied by an adjective or group of adjectives describing the 'αἵρεσις' as such. In 2 Peter 2:1, for example, the word is used in conjunction with the adjective ἀπώλεια, meaning 'destructive heresies'. In other cases, where an accompanying adjective is not present, context usually makes the meaning unmistakable. In Galatians 5:20, for example, the term is used at the end of a long list consisting of idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, etc. See also the various references in G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Clarendon Press, 1961) s.v. Simon argues that the word may already have taken on a negative connotation by the time that Acts was written, and refers to Acts 24:5 and 28:22 for evidence. But, on closer inspection, both of these references to the use of the term are similarly accompanied by derogatory adjectives, elucidating the intended meaning of αἵρεσις, as in the case in 2 Peter. See Simon, 'Early Christian Literature', p. 105. It is true that later the word could be used achieve a purely negative meaning. Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35–107), in his letters uses it to refer to false teaching purporting to be Christian. See his letter to letter to the Ephesians 6.2 and his letter to the Trallians 6.1. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer (eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (2nd edn., Baker Book House Company, 1992) at pp. 140 and 162 with translations. Other theologians to use the term in this way who composed similar treatises to John's *De Fide* and on whom John relied are Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315–387) in his famous catechetical sermons (PG 33.457), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330–395) in his commentary on the Song of Songs. See H. Langerbeck (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni In Canticum Canticorum* (Brill, 1960), p. 339, ln. 19. Cyril is perhaps the most derogatory in his usage, as he refers to "τὸ τῆς αἱρέσεως ἰοβόλον" or the "poison arrow of heresy".

Even well after the New Testament period, the word 'heresy' could be used in categorical discourse without necessarily having a particular stigma attached to it. Certain writers, on whom John of Damascus relied a great deal, such as Maximus the Confessor (c. 580–662), seem not to have used the word in this way at all.[58] Gregory Nazianzus (c. 329–389), perhaps the person on whom John relied most heavily in his works, used the term in a variety of ways, but only in his Oration 25, 'In Praise of the Philosopher Hero', did he use it negatively without an accompanying adjective.[59] In his Oration 14, he uses the term to mean choice, when asking his congregation rhetorically if they think having compassion is an 'αἵρεσις', or 'choice'.[60]

Further, it can be seen in Roman legal texts as late as the fifth century to refer to groups that formed a guild of professional workers.[61] In this case the word was used to refer to a group rather than an opinion of belief. There was something of a tension between Christian, pagan, and legal views of heresy in the first centuries after Christ, and perhaps some inconsistency as well. How, for example, could the Theodosian Code identify heresy as treason when it was published in 438, but not, in the recent wake of the publication of Epiphanius' influential heresiology in 377, treat pagan philosophical and Jewish groups as traitors? The criminalization of heresy can be traced back to the *Cunctos Populos* of AD 380, in which Christianity was elevated to the position of the state religion, but that text, arranged in the thick of the Arian controversy, was intended for Christian groups not adhering to the imperial authority's definition of 'Catholic Christianity'.[62] There was no general crime of 'heresy' *per se*, but instead specific prohibitions against particular activities of intended groups, and these of course did not cleanly map on to Christian conceptions of

58 This appears to be the case using a search of his works in Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.

59 In that Oration, Gregory uses 'αἵρεσις' four times, three of which the meaning of αἵρεσις is clearly negative and intended to slander, one of which Gregory uses the accompanying adjective 'κακὸς' to elucidate his meaning.

60 PG 35.909.16.

61 C. Humfress, 'Citizens and Heretics: Late Roman Lawyers on Christian Heresy', in E. Iricinschi and H. M. Zellentin (eds.), *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 128–42, at 142.

62 For general analysis, see L. Barnard, 'The Criminalisation of Heresy in the later Roman Empire: A Sociopolitical Device?' *The Journal of Legal History* 16.2 (1995), pp. 121–46 and M. V. E. Paño, 'The Social Exclusion of Heretics in Codex Theodosianus XVI', in J.-J. Aubert and P. Blanchard (eds.), *Droit, religion et société dans le Code Théodosien* (Université de Neuchâtel, 2009), pp. 39–66. For the specific statute in the Theodosian Code, see statute 16.1.2, in C. Pharr (ed.), *The Theodosian Code* (Princeton University Press, 1952).

heresy.[63] Apart from the legal definition that the name of 'Catholic Christians' be received by those who, 'shall believe in the single Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty of the Trinity', further definitions by the legal authority were not regularly forthcoming.[64] Not nearly enough attention has been paid to the fact that there was really little agreement on what was meant by the word *hairesis* across the religious and political spectrum, a situation that in many ways persisted long after the third century.[65]

To add to the complication of matters, it is clear that in the minds of certain heresiologists, the adherents of different heresies required different treatment if they wished to come back into communion with the group from whose perspective the heresiologist was writing.[66] Timothy of Constantinople wrote on the different ways in which the church received repentant heretics back into its fold.[67] The Quinisext Council of Trullo in 691–92 also dealt with the reception of heretics depending from which heresy the penitent came.[68] Thus, the label 'αἵρεσις' clearly encompassed a spectrum of belief, ranging from those who held beliefs close to what was considered 'orthodox', to those who held beliefs having little to do with orthodoxy.

Early Christian Use of Heresiology

As seen above, heresiology as a categorizing form of discourse began before the coming of Christ, and this necessarily meant that Christians adopted

63 Barnard, 'The Criminalisation of Heresy', p. 127.

64 Pharr (ed.), *The Theodosian Code* 16.1.2.

65 For the differing legal uses, see Humfress, 'Citizens and Heretics'. Humfess writes, "It is striking, even bizarre, to find *haeresis* being used as a neutral term approximating to 'guild' or (corporate) group in early fifth century Western legislation at a time when heresy as erroneous belief was apparently a major preoccupation of Roman legislators. Around two weeks later, and at the Eastern rather than Western capital (Constantinople as opposed to Ravenna), a *quaestor* does produce a law against 'heresy' in the religious sense, but not without complaining that 'listing the names of heretical sects is boring.' '… These texts are a reminder that the attitude of late Roman lawyers to heresy is not to be taken for granted.'"

66 A. Cameron, 'How to Read Heresiology', *JMEMS* 33.3 (2003), pp. 471–92.

67 PG 86.13–68.

68 Canon 95 decreed that some heretics required only chrismation to be received, while others required full baptism.

some of the practices of the heresiologists before them when they first began to compose their own heresiologies. Approaching the understanding of what Christians meant by 'heresy', Alain Le Boulluec, in his important two-volume study entitled, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque: iie–iiie siècles*, set about the study of heresy and its application by Christians by assessing how different heresiologists approached their subject matter.[69] He observed that the earliest Christians of the Apostolic period had no systematic model of exclusion, and as a result they used different terms to express who were outsiders to them, a situation which to some extent continued throughout the first three centuries.[70] But, the word *hairesis* was not used exclusively to refer to doctrinal deviations. Rather, it often referred to a political problem interior to the church, represented either by a party expressing a particular opinion, or resisting the authority of the Church of the Apostles.[71] Further, since separation from the Church preceded the development of an independent school of thought, schism necessarily preceded heresy. This usage of *hairesis* is common to Heggesippus, Origen, and Clement of Rome, and appears in several cases in parts of the New Testament. One appearance of *hairesis* in the Book of Acts appears to take for granted a pejorative understanding for the term, when Paul is accused of membership in the 'sect of the Nazarenes'.[72] Paul's own defense against the characterization that he belongs to a 'heresy' demonstrates that the word could have an understood pejorative meaning even at this early stage.

Le Boulluec further located what he believed to be a turning point in the production of Christian heresiology in the work of Justin Martyr (103–65). In his view, Justin (whom he understands to be the founder of heresiology proper, and who was followed by all subsequent heresiologists) sees the heresies as the result of demonic intrusions into the life of the Church. The consequential result is false doctrine, usually perpetrated by a false prophet under the influence of the demons.[73] Further, another important novelty introduced by Justin was the deliberate reprisal of an historical scheme whereby philosophical schools, along with their principal founders, were organized chronologically, and

69 Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*. For a good summary of this mammoth work, see M. Desjardins, 'Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of Hairesis in the Early Christian Era', *The Second Century* 8.2 (1991), pp. 65–82.

70 Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, p. 547.

71 Ibid., p. 23.

72 Acts 24. Le Boullouec shows that already at this early stage one could understand the word heresy, in the Judeo-Hellenic world as pejorative and restrictive. Ibid., pp. 38–39.

73 Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 29–31, 64–67, and 84.

heresies were considered to have developed in succession from each other.[74] As stated above, this was a practice already in use by the philosophers, who provided lists with descriptions of the various schools of philosophy, and by medical practitioners listing the various medical schools of thought in antiquity. Justin adopted this scheme for his heresiology, but interestingly left out the philosophical schools from his list, and, as far as we know, never used the word *hairesis* to refer to the philosophical schools, although he was undoubtedly familiar with the literature that did so.

Le Boulluec felt that the distinction was so stark that it warranted an alternative name for the process whereby Christians listed and refuted heresies. The non-Christian process by which a list of 'schools of thought' were listed and described, thus providing data about the differences between groups, was extensive enough that some modern scholars have followed Le Boulluec and use the term 'heresiography' to distinguish it from its polemical Christian counterpart 'heresiology'.[75] Le Boulluec's taxonomical adjustment has not received universal reception, and perhaps with good reason. As we have seen all too many times in the study of the Patristic period, the lines between Hellenic philosophy and Christian theology were anything but rigid and impenetrable, and overlapping methodologies for the descriptions of the heresies persisted. Additionally, modern scholars of Islam have tended to use of the word 'heresiography' for the parallel practice in that faith, which far more closely resembles the Christian polemical practice than the Hellenic philosophical one.[76]

Following on Le Boulluec's work others have taken a deeper interest in heresy and heresiology, and these have occasionally yielded further results in the attempt to understand how and why heresiology is used as a categorizing discourse, and what it accomplishes. As regards the study of Christian heresiology, perhaps most relevant to the early period has been the observation that heresiology of the first five centuries after Christ can be seen to have flourished in two distinct periods. The first period can be dated to approximately 150–230, and was undertaken entirely in Greek, while the second period began *circa* 370,

74 Ibid., pp. 48–51.

75 See for example the work of Glucker, and now Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context*, as well as D. T. Runia, 'Review of La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque: iie–iiie siècles', VC 42.2 (1988), pp. 188–207, who calls attention to Le Boulluec as the author of this distinction.

76 See Henderson, *Construction of Orthodoxy*, pp. 1–25, who instead uses 'heresiography' to refer to all of the various literary forms, and points out that Islamicists have begun using it as a term to refer to the listing of heresies in the Islamic tradition. See, for example, W. Madelung and P. E. Walker, *An Ismaili Heresiography: The "Bāb al-shayṭān" from Abū Tammām's Kitāb al-shajara* (Brill, 1998).

included heresiological works in Latin, and ended around 450.[77] The reasons for the generation of heresiology in these two periods will be discussed further below, as well as some later heresiologies prior to John's work in the early eighth century.

It has been observed that heresiology as a genre of Christian literature—and it has been argued that so has been the case in all religions—experienced a 'golden-age' around the fourth century after the religion's appearance.[78] If so, the models developed for heresiology in the first four centuries are highly formative for the heresiology of later generations. Understanding both what those early forms were, and how John's deviated from them are necessary prerequisites to understanding how he came to fit Islam into his book. The feature of heresy in the early church described above, namely the expectation that heretics began their career as 'insiders' or at the least were perceived as 'insiders' or people claiming 'insider' status to the Christian community, was not the only one. In order to understand the background to John's use of the term, let us briefly consider a couple further defining features of early heresiology, along side some specific characteristics of John's heresiology, in order to understand how these early features are either absent or recessive in John's heresiological program. It is because of their absence, and the specific characteristics and the historical conditions under which John wrote, that we should think of his work under a different light from that usually used in the consideration of Christian heresiology in scholarship thus far.

The Demonic Nature of Heresy

Closely associated with the concept that one had to willfully reject the Church to achieve the label of 'heretic' was the concept that demonic activity was at work either in the individual who did so, or in the heresy to which one turned. Demons were a fact of life in late antiquity, but how they were understood differed from person to person, although they clearly acquired exclusively negative associations among Christians.[79] Le Boulluec only considered heresiologies

77 Inglebert, 'L'histoire des hérésies'.

78 See Inglebert, 'L'histoire des hérésies', and J. Gouillard, 'L'hérésie dans l'empire byzantine des origines au XIIe siècle', *TM* 1 (1965), pp. 299–324, p. 301 for the claim regarding Christianity, both of whom follow others, and Henderson, *Construction of Orthodoxy*, p. 30, who believes this applies to every faith.

79 Understanding of demons underwent transformation in late antiquity through which they became associated exclusively with evil machinations, and not simply as spirits capable

in the first three centuries in his work, but showed that one of the novelties Christians introduced into the pre-existent practice of Hellenic philosophical heresiology was the demonization of the heresiarch, and the depiction of heresy as the product of demonic activity.[80]

Le Boulluec, however, did not consider the extent to which free will was the agency through which the demons operated in coercing their subjects into heresy. As a general rule, popular Christian conception of the demons was that they had limited power to do harm without the willing participation of the person they threatened. The very popular *Life of Anthony* written by Athanasius illustrates this point:

> What appears in them is not true light; rather, they contain the initial elements and likenesses of the fire prepared for them, and in those elements in which they are soon to be consumed they attempt to terrify mankind. They do, without doubt, appear, but they disappear again at once, harming none of the faithful, but carrying with themselves the likeness of the fire that is about to receive them. So here it is not necessary to fear them, for by the grace of Christ all their pursuits come to nothing.[81]

Numerous similar passages from the life of Anthony indicate that demons were effectively powerless against the sign of the cross and the name of Christ. Yet if they were powerless, it was a qualified powerlessness, for the demons could sometimes cause bodily harm, even if they were not permitted to enact evil against man or offer him temptations without God's permission to do so.[82] The example of Job in the Bible presented the most obvious evidence for such a belief. Demonic power appears to have been delimited by their inability to wrest their salvation from a person, just as was the case with Job. At most, they

---

of doing good or evil. The timing of this transition is unclear, however, despite claims that it was in place by the third century. For the view that demons were viewed as exclusively evil in late antiquity even by Neoplatonists such as Porphry, see G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, and O. Grabar, *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Harvard University Press, 1999), s.v. 'Demons'. For a more nuanced view, which shows that Porphyry could still see some demons as good, see A. Nance, 'Porphyry: The Man and His Demons', *Hirundo: The McGill Journal of Classical Studies* 2 (2002), pp. 37–57.

80 Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 64–67.

81 Athanasius and R. C. Gregg, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus* (SPCK, 1980), p. 50.

82 R. P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), pp. 77–89.

could tempt their victims to deny Christ or abandon his Church. This is perhaps best stated in John Cassian's work *The Conferences*:

> Preserving then these distinctions clear and fixed, and knowing that there is nothing good except virtue alone, and nothing bad except sin alone and separation from God, let us now carefully consider whether God ever allows evil to be forced on his saints either by Himself or by some one else. And you will certainly find that this never happens. For another can never possibly force the evil of sin upon anyone, who does not consent and who resists, but only on one who admits it into himself through sloth and the corrupt desire of his heart.[83]

Those who admit it into themselves, however, were of course in great danger of losing their salvation. As the fall into heresy was perceived as a fall to something outside the boundaries of the saving Church, responsibility lay with the demons to the extent that they could extract an act of the will from their subject. There are no cases, to my knowledge, of a person being *forced* into heresy by demons. The only possible exception to this might be found in demonic possession. Even here, however, the tendency was to feel pity, rather than to judge such a person, and not to hold him to blame or judgment for having been possessed.[84]

The fact that the will was linked to both heresy and the demons was perhaps the result of associating the demons with apostasy from God. The idea that demons were fallen angels in rebellion from God, although not explicit in the biblical scriptures, is implied in several places, and elaborated on in Jewish tradition prior to Christ.[85] Thus, it was natural for the heresiologist to associate the demons with heresy, and blame the heretic at the same time for succumbing to the demons, while still holding the demons ultimately responsible for heresy.

Le Boulluec noticed this feature of demonology and early heresiology, and showed how Justin and Irenaeus conceived of demonic activity and heresy as closely related. Just as the demons had fallen from God, man fell from the Church. For Justin, the demons operated in history prior to the coming of Christ through magic. Now, however, the demons had a new vocation in tempting man away from Christ. They now worked through both the mediums of

83 J. Cassian, *The Conferences*, trans. B. Ramsey (Paulist Press, 1997) (6. 4).
84 Greenfield, *Late Byzantine Demonology*, p. 93.
85 Ibid., pp. 7–13.

heresy *and* magic [following him].[86] Analogy was easily made to the serpent in the Garden of Eden, and its role in tempting man away from God. Epiphanius elaborated on this theme in the *Panarion*, and referred to many of the heresies on which he wrote as poisonous snakes.[87]

As an evil that was not wholly the fault of the victim, demonic possession was seen by many as an illness in need of a cure, and heretics were deemed among the first in need. As a result of their illness, heretics were seen as a threat to the local community that required exclusion to prevent infection by contagion.[88] They were also identified with treason by the imperial authorities from the time of Constantine, a perspective enshrined in the Theodosian Code.[89]

Heresy as the Result of Philosophical Speculation

A third defining feature of early heresiology that was absent from Justin's work, but which quickly developed after him, was its link to philosophical speculation as one of the main causes of heresy. This principal cause of heresy was also absent from Clement, but recurs in virtually all other heresiologists up to the fifth century, and is found in Irenaeus, Ephrem the Syrian, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius. Justin was a philosopher by trade, and so it is understandable that he would have desired to find a peaceful resolution between his own experience of Christianity and that which had fostered his growth in knowledge prior to it, although there have certainly been examples of those who made a full rejection of their previous lives in Christian history. Clement, on the other hand, ran a catechetical school in Alexandria, and developed Christian Platonism. He defended the use of philosophy in theology, and believed it a necessary tool in the service of the discrimination of the true truth against error of all kinds.[90]

---

86 Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 64–67.

87 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. xvii.

88 Paño, 'Social Exclusion of Heretics'.

89 Humfress, 'Citizens and Heretics'.

90 Clement's view of heresy is highly nuanced, and he sees certain heresies as having betrayed the philosophy of Plato and misused it. See E. F. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1–25 and 62–64, for Clement's background, and Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 274–88 for his specific attitude toward philosophy, paganism and heresy.

However, for the majority of early heresiologists it was necessary to reject the use of worldly knowledge in the pursuit of divine knowledge, as embodied in the Scriptures and the Judaic and emerging Christian tradition. The simplicity of the faith was contrasted to the use of knowledge to advance in the spiritual life. As Le Boullouec has shown, the early heresiologists were motivated by the need to combat Gnosticism in all its various forms.[91] Gnosticism, however, required the acquisition of a mystical knowledge to obtain salvation; it was part of the heresiologist's job to reject that knowledge. Several Gnostic groups, such as the Valentinians and Sethians, founded themselves on parts of the Christian tradition and Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy.[92] Christian heresiologists tended to see Gnostic ideas as extensions of Platonic and Arisotelian philosophy until the late third-century when rejection of these Gnostic groups was accomplished by Neoplatonist philosophers such as Plotinus and Porphyry. The rejection of the different Gnostic groups often found its epitome in *ad hominem* attacks on Plato and Aristotle themselves, and attacks on Platonic or Neoplatonic and Aristotelian philosophy more generally.

Perhaps the most striking example of this is found in Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–c. 236), a study of whom Le Boulluec unfortunately omitted from his wide-ranging study of early heresiologists. Hippolytus went to remarkable lengths to show that each heretic effectively stole his error from a prior philosopher, even appearing to consciously distort or omit information he received from prior heresiologists such as Irenaeus in order to do so. By carefully omitting portions of what he received from Irenaeus on the Valentinians, Hippolytus could better achieve his goal in depicting the Valentinians as followers of Pythagoras.[93]

But Hippolytus was not the only one to blame philosophy for much of the heresy surrounding him, nor was he even the first. Irenaeus (140–202), who is profoundly philosophical and appears well-versed in the various philosophical systems, makes all of them subservient to religious truth, and accuses Valentinus and his followers of corrupting the candor and simplicity of the

91 See especially his conclusion to the work. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 547–55.

92 See the collection of articles in J. D. Turner and R. D. Majercik (eds.), *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts* (Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) and J. D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001).

93 See J. Kalvesmaki, *The Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in Platonism and Early Christianity* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2013). For Hippolytus' general attempt to show that each heresy comes from a philosophy, see M. Marcovich (ed.), *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* (De Gruyter, 1986), pp. 35–38, and Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context*, passim.

Christian faith by the addition of subtleties drawn from Aristotle.[94] In another place, he accuses a certain sect of adoring Aristotle as well as the Saviour.[95] Tertullian's (c. 160–c. 225) *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* is devoted to the task of showing that heresy is derived from pagan philosophy and self-will, and that philosophy has no place in the development of theology.[96]

Heresiologists writing during what has been identified as the second major phase of heresiology wrote during a period in which the definition of Christian culture was being forged together with its relationship to the classical culture in which the church grew.[97] By the time the dust settled in the fourth century, and it gradually became clear that Gnosticism and Greek philosophy were not necessarily to be identified with one another, Christians faced a reassertion of the links between paganism and philosophy in the efforts of the emperor Julian (355–363). Julian's bifurcation of Christianity on the one hand and classical *paideia* and paganism on the other reinforced the notion that the two were incompatible.[98] Christian responses were not hard to find. The canonically sanctioned *Apostolic Constitutions* (c. 375), originally received as being handed down by Clement of Rome (d. c. 101), stated:

> Abstain from all the heathen books. For what have you to do with such foreign discourses, or laws, or false prophets, which subvert the faith of the unstable? For what defect do you find in the law of God, that you should have recourse to those heathenish fables? For if you have a mind to read history, you have the books of the Kings; if books of wisdom or poetry, you have those of the Prophets, of Job, and the Proverbs, in which

94 A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau (eds.), *Contre les Hérésies: Livre II* (Editions du Cerf, 1982), pp. 130–47 (2.14).

95 A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau (eds.), *Contre les Hérésies: Livre I* (Editions du Cerf, 1965), pp. 344–45 (25.6). See also Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 136–56.

96 See Tertullian, P. C. D. Labriolle, and R. F. Refoulé, *De la prescription contre les hérétiques* (Éditions du Cerf, 1957).

97 Inglebert, 'L'histoire des hérésies', p. 112, is specific on this point, and believes it is crucial to appreciate the difference in how we understand the two periods of heresiological discourse in the first five centuries.

98 On this issue, see A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 143–54.

> you will find greater depth of sagacity than in all the heathen poets and sophisters, because these are the words of the Lord, the only wise God.[99]

Epiphanius, who received so much of his own heresiology from Irenaeus and Hippolytus, was greatly influenced by their perspectives.[100] Epiphanius calls particular attention to his difference with learned people in the second Proemium to his treatise, and contrasts his methodology with that of the Greeks, stating that he will call on God instead of a Muse for his own inspiration, and that he will offer his work without the use of rhetoric.[101] In the *Panarion*, he ascribes delusion to Plato and poison to Aristotle and his followers in several places.[102] Epiphanius appears in certain regards to go even further than his theological predecessors in the warning against classical *paideia* altogether as a road to heresy.[103] The general theme of Christian simplicity over and against worldly philosophical knowledge would be expressed again and again in different formats by Christians throughout late antiquity, and can be found in the works of theologians such as John Chrysostom, and the

99 M. Metzger (ed.), *Les Constitutions Apostoliques* 3 vols. (Editions du Cerf, 1985), p. 116 (1.6), trans. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson et al. (eds.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. VII* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 393.

100 See A. Pourkier, *L'hérésiologie chez Epiphane de Salamine* (Beauchesne, 1992), pp. 52–76 for a discussion of Epiphanius's sources and his use of them. Her suggestion that Josipus was the author of the *Elenchos*, however, is to be doubted. On that work, see Marcovich (ed.), *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, pp. 8–17 for the view that it was written by Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–236), the author of the *Syntagma.*

101 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, pp. 13–15.

102 See Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, p. 272, for Plato as a 'victim of delusion' and Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, p. 388 for the poison of Aristotle. Writing of Epiphanes the Secundian, he says, "But it was because of the excess of his education, both in the arts, and in Platonic philosophy that the whole deceit came to them from him …" Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 211.

103 R. Lyman, 'The Making of a Heretic: The Life of Origen in Epiphanius Panarion 64', *StPatr* 31 (1997), pp. 445–51 and idem., 'Ascetics and Bishops. Epiphanius on Orthodoxy', in S. Elm, E. Rebillard, and A. Romano (eds.), *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, Histoire. Orthodoxy, Christianity, History* (Ecole Francaise de Rome, 2000), pp. 149–61. Also, see Y. R. Kim, 'Reading the Panarion as Collective Biography: The Heresiarch as Unholy Man', *VC* 64.4 (2010), pp. 382–413, especially, 406–12. For the view that Epiphanius was not highly classically educated, but that he did know the works of Philo and Jospehus, see idem., 'The Imagined Worlds of Epiphanius of Cyprus', unpublished Ph.D. (University of Michigan, 2006), at 187–90.

ecclesiastical historians Socrates (fl. 4th century), Sozomen (c. 400–c. 450), and Rufinus (c. 344–410).[104]

Despite that the impetus of combating Gnosticism waned in later years along with Gnosticism itself, claims of philosophical speculation as one of the root causes of heresy did not disappear as an idea in John of Damascus' time, even though many theologians relied on philosophical tools for the development of their theology. In the *Hodegos* or *The Guide*, one of John's co-religionists, Anastasius of Sinai, composed a major work principally against Monophysitism, but also against other heresies.[105] The modern editor of this work has called chapter two of this work "The Aristotelian roots of Monophysitism." In this chapter, Anastasius associates the ten horns of the dragon found in the book of Revelation with the ten categories of Aristotle, and links ten major heresiarchs to the categories.[106] In another chapter, he exhorts Christians to avoid Hellenic and Aristotelian teaching: "By no means should the faithful accept teaching Christian doctrine according to Hellenic and Aristotelian teaching."[107] In chapter eight he reminds his readers that Moses taught what he did in Genesis without recourse to Aristotle.[108] Later in the same chapter he stresses that the Church teaches not according to Aristotle and the other Greeks, because Aristotle has a misunderstanding of nature (φύσις).[109] This was despite Anastasius' obvious classical education, as has been observed by several modern commentators.[110]

104 John Chrysostom states in his first homily on Romans that, "It was not that we might be busybodies and inquire into his essence but that we might believe in his name. For it was in his name that miracles were wrought. We read in the book of Acts that Peter said: "In the name of Jesus Christ, get up and walk." And this very thing requires faith. We cannot fully grasp any of these miracles by our power of reason alone." For examples of how Sozomen, Socrates and Rufinus all elaborated this theme, see R. Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (University of California Press, 1995).

105 K.-H. Uthemann (ed.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Viae Dux* (Brepols, 1981).

106 L. S. B. Maccoull, 'Anastasius of Sinai and the Ten-Horned Dragon', *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 9 (1990), pp. 193–94.

107 Uthemann (ed.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Viae Dux*, 6.2.30.

108 Ibid., 8.1.12.

109 Ibid., 8.5.114.

110 J. Munitiz, 'Anastasios of Sinai: Speaking and Writing to the People of God', in M. Cunningham and P. Allen (eds.), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Brill, 1998), pp. 227–45.

Other Typical Traits of Heresiology

Other typical traits of heresiology exist, and although these are interesting, I will not dwell on them, except to name a few, and briefly explain them. Attention, for example, is often called to the multiplicity of heresy as something contrasted to the unity of the one true church. The idea that multiplicity or diversity distorted the truth has been shown to go back as far as Levitical injunctions against the cleanness of certain kinds of animals.[111] In all cases, the point is made clear: God is one, and so his people, creation, and Church are uniform in their respective natures. Whatever is found outside of that unity is not of God. This is certainly a characteristic of John's heresiology, and his increase of the number of heresies from the 80 he received to 100 served the purpose of contrasting the unity of the Church to the multiplicity of heresy. The use of the century as a sociological tool depicting multiplicity is well known, and need not interest us further here.[112]

It was important for the heresiologist to establish that the subject of his material descended from other, earlier, heresies. This was done normally to assist in discrediting the new heresy as something built on already troubled foundations. The impetus for doing so, as has been pointed out, came partly from the Christian communities' emphasis on apostolic succession; just as the True Church had been handed down in succession, so were heresies, in contrast to the church.[113] Links were drawn between those who had already been cast as heretics, and those the heresiologist now wanted to condemn. This is a practice to which we need to return later, but in certain regards we might question whether John lives up to this aspect of early heresiology.

The naming of heretics according to certain principles was also a feature of heresiology, and one that was partly inherited from pagan philosophers. Typically a heresy would receive its name from its founder, or as a result of what it was perceived the group believed or did in contrast to that of the

111 The typical study is that done by M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Routledge, 2002).

112 Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born, showing a great number of years. Organizing statements into a group of one hundred seems to have been first done by Evagrius of Pontus (345–399 AD), in his work on 'The Monk: A Treatise on the Practical Life'. Origen had repeated several times in his works that one hundred was a sacred number, reflecting perfection and the monad of God. Hence, a tradition arose wherein certain numbers were seen as reflecting completeness or totality.

113 See Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, pp. 84–90.

heresiologist's. Thus we read about the *Simonians* and *Valentinians* in the work of Ireneaus because they are seen to have taken their origin from Simon Magus and Valentinus (c. 100–c. 160), but we also hear of the *Gnostics* and *Ophites* in the work of Epiphanius because they are obsessed by secret knowledge (γνῶσις) and favor the serpent (ὄφις) to Christ respectively.[114] Thus heresiology developed a number of definining features most or all of which a subsequent heresiologist was obliged to assimilate if he wished to categorize the other as 'heresy'. John of Damascus of course participates in many of these, although in his own particular way. But to see why he worked as he did, we must first consider the contemporary intellectual background to his work.

114 Epiphanius received his information on the Gnostics from Irenaeus, and on the Ophites from the lost *Syntagma* of Hippolytus.

CHAPTER 2

Aspects of the Intellectual Background

The Encyclopedism of Christian Palestine

Before proceeding to see how traits common to most heresiologies given above appear to take on a different significance in John's heresiology, it will be useful to briefly consider the scope of John's work, how it was structured, what he was attempting to accomplish, and for whom. As Louth has pointed out, commentators on the *Dialectica* have not treated it as important to the rest of the *Fount of Knowledge*.[1] This is unfortunate, not least because there is good reason to suppose that John did, but also because the nature of the work itself requires us to understand that the whole of it functions together as a synthesis of all that which John considered 'knowledge'.

As briefly mentioned in the above, as a result of the way the work was transmitted, and the limited information we are able to draw from the text itself, we are somewhat at a loss to understand at what time the various parts of *The Fount* were written, as well as when it was finally put together. Nonetheless, Kotter and Louth have put forth convincing conjectures in light of what we do know, including the thought that John probably did intend the work to contain all three parts. It is necessary to further place those conjectures in context to further speculate on how Islam could fit into the work on heresies.

It must be observed that the cost of the production of such a work as *The Fount* was considerable, and to have written at such length would imply that the author expected the work to have more than simply probative value.[2] The

1 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, p. 46. He cites Richter, who says that the *De Fide* makes no use of the 'Philosophical Chapters'. See G. Richter (ed.), *Philosophische Kapitel* (Anton Hiersemann, 1982), p. 82.

2 Wilson examines the availability of writing materials and the cost of book production in Byzantium. His figures help get a picture of what it might have cost to produce such a volume as *The Fount* in Constantinople in the tenth century, although he admits that parchment seems to have been in greater supply in Palestine, a fact no doubt confirmed by the considerable disparity in production of works in Constantinople and Palestine in John's period. Nonetheless, we should assume that a volume such as John's tripartite work would have been well outside of the means of ninety-five percent of the population, if not more. In practice, such works were to find their homes in the monastery and patriarchal libraries that could afford to copy them. See N. G. Wilson, 'Books and Readers in Byzantium', in C. Mango and I. Ševčenko (eds.), *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1975), pp. 1–15.

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_004

apparently original intention of John was to place the *Dialectica* in front of the *De Fide* for a work of 150 chapters, mirroring the imagery of the number of Pslams, and using the practice of combining a dogmatic treatise with a set of definitions as was apparently common in John's time.[3] The heresiology, it seems, was added later, and this of course would have furthered the whole work's expense. *The Fount of Knowledge* as John finally planned it (to be distinguished from how it would most commonly circulate) takes up 277 folia in the only extant full manuscript we have of it, which would probably have cost around 15–20 nomismata, a considerable expense for anyone interested in its reproduction.[4]

Yet the work is also notable for its differences with two other works often cited in connection with it and written around the same time and place, the *Doctrina Patrum* and *Sacra Parallela.*[5] These two enormous works sought to acquire and record quotation after quotation from prior Fathers of the Church on various pressing issues of the Melkite Orthodox faith. Louth has rightly called attention to the *Fount* as a participant in two literary genres, that of the *florilegium* and that of the *century.*[6] He speculates, however, that the audience for whom John first intended his work of 150 chapters and that for whom he intended the tri-partite work of 250 chapters were likely different, an audience for whom "the account of heresy was important."[7] Such comprehensiveness as found in the *Fount* should be seen in the context of those two other works which seek at similar kinds of totality and it is fair to see it, and the *Doctrina* and *Sacra Parallela* as participants in yet another emerging literary form in

3 For this, see Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 31–37 and G. Richter, *Die Dialektik des Johannes von Damaskos: Eine Untersuchung des Textes nach seinen Quellen und seiner Bedeutung* (Buch-Kunstverlag, 1964), pp. 23–30.

4 For the approximate cost of books in Byzantium, see Wilson, 'Availability of Books'. The number of folia above refers to MS Venet. Marc. gr. 11, 196. See Kotter, *Die Überlieferung der Pege Gnoseos*, p. 86, written in miniscule. John's work, written in Uncials, would have been even longer, which is why I have estimated the cost of it to be similar to what Wilson estimates for a manuscript of approximately another 100 folia. Obviously all such estimates are tentative, but in any case we can be certain John's work would have been highly expensive to reproduce.

5 These two anonymous woks have both at various times been ascribed to John, although in all likelihood the *Doctrina* cannot have been by John, and while the author of the *Sacra Parallela* remains a mystery, signs pointing to John are not definitive. For the *Doctrina*, already referred to above, see Diekamp (ed.), *Doctrina Patrum*. For the *Sacra Parallela*, see K. Holl, *Die Sacra Parallela des Johannes Damaskenos* (J. C. Hinrichs, 1896).

6 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 35–37.

7 Ibid., p. 34.

the Byzantine world, that of the encyclopedia.[8] Lemerle was the first scholar to draw our attention to an age of 'Encyclopedism' in the Byzantine Empire, which he dated to the beginning of the ninth century in Constantinople.[9] However, it is clear that such a trend began sometime before the ninth century, and was present at least by the early eighth century when John wrote his encyclopedic work, *The Fount of Knowledge*. Indeed, if there is nothing that the authors of *The Fount*, the *Doctrina Patrum*, and the *Sacra Parallela* did not aim at, it is comprehensiveness. These were massive compendia of knowledge attempting to collect once and for all the criteria of orthodoxy, whether in florilegial form as can be found in parts of these works, or in more doctrinal and dogmatic form, also found across all three.

John's work, however, makes use of the material he collects in a highly systematic way, in some contrast to the *Sacra Parallela* and the *Doctrina Patrum.* As I already mentioned, his work was effectively a kind of rejection of the methods chosen by Anastasius of Sinai, who called attention to the lack of books to which he had access, and who, at least in comparison with John, appears to have composed his principal works in a rather disorganized and haphazard way.[10] As regards the three works under consideration here, all assembled together vast ranges of sources, but only *The Fount* does so in a completely organized and systematic way, while the other two make use of more recently recognized methodologies for the organization of knowledge, such as, for example, the alphabetic organization of subject matter, and the use of indices.[11]

8 There has been some debate on the nature of early encyclopedias, and in what they consisted. Here I do not intend to presume either that John conceived of his whole work as an 'ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία', a term which might more properly be applied to the *Dialectica* alone, but rather I mean it in the modern sense as a work which is intended to encompass either all knowledge, or all of one area of knowledge. For the use and understanding of the encyclopedia in antiquity, see A. Doody, 'Pliny's Natural History: Enkuklios Paideia and the Ancient Encyclopedia', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70.1 (2009), pp. 1–21. For how such a work as the *Dialectica* was used as an 'ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία' or 'general education' to prepare one for the further study of philosophy, or in John's case, theology, see N. M. Kalogeras, 'Byzantine Childhood Education and its Social Role from the Sixth Century unti the end of Iconoclasm', (University of Chicago, 2000), pp. 138–41 (unpublished Ph.D.).

9 P. Lemerle, H. Lindsay, and A. Moffatt, *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase: Notes and Remarks on Education and Culture in Byzantium from its Origins to the 10th century* (Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986).

10 Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature*, pp. 75–78. Kazhdan refers to John's work as a 'rejection' of the methods employed by Athanasius, although calling it a 'rejection' may be harsh.

11 Alphabetic organization of subject matter such as that found in both the *Sacra Parallela* and the *Doctrina Patrum* were unusual in the Late Antique and ancient world. Although

John himself informs us of his encyclopedic intentions in both the preface to the *Fount of Knowledge* and in the first two chapters of the *Dialectica*, which serves as a further introduction to the whole of the *Fount*:

> Our purpose, then, is to make a beginning of philosophy and to set down concisely in the present writing, so far as is possible, every sort of knowledge (παντοδαπὴν γνῶσιν). For this reason let it be entitled a *Fount of Knowledge*.[12]

John's project then, despite his claims only to repeat that which has gone before him, is considerably larger in scope than a simple recapitulation of past observances. Instead, it is an attempt to classify and systematize "every sort of knowledge".

As a systematically organized encyclopedic work, we can be fairly certain that it was intended to be read in a particular way. The rise and use of the modern encyclopedia as a tool for the organization of knowledge has obscured the fact that prior generations of encyclopedists intended and expected their works to be read and assimilated in full.[13] Systematic organizations of

---

not unheard of, prior to the 17th century nearly all works attempting to achieve an 'encyclopedic' value were organized systematically, instead of alphabetically. Only the *Doctrina* employs an index, on which, see more here below.

12 Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 10. There has been some discussion regarding whether the first two chapters of the *Dialectica* should be read to apply to the whole of the *Fount* or only that set down in the *Dialectica* itself, and indeed whether the term 'Fount' (Πηγή) was meant to apply to whole work or only the *Dialectica*. I am of the first opinion, as we know for certain that John added these two introductory chapters at a late stage in the development of the *Dialectica*, after which time we should assume that he had written *On Heresies*, if we accept Louth's conjectures that John was in the process of revising the *Dialectica* when he died, and that he expected all three works to appear together. However, even should these lines apply only the *Dialectica* John has wed himself to the idea of an encyclopedic work in his prefatory epistle a few lines before these, which certainly do apply to the whole of the work. In those lines, John writes, "I shall add nothing of my own, but gather together into one those things which have been worked out by the most eminent teachers and make a compendium of them …" Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 6. For further discussion on the *Dialectica*, its development, and scope, see Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 38–42 and Richter (ed.), *Philosophische Kapitel*. For the view that the term 'Fount' should be applied to all three books, see L. Allatius, *De Sancto Joanne Damasceno Prolegomena et Dissertationenes*, PG 94, pp. 133–34.

13 R. L. Collison, *Encyclopaedias: Their History throughout the Ages* (2nd edn., Hafner, 1966), pp. 1–20. Collison's wonderful volume unfortunately misses John's work as an encyclopedia, although he does recognize Constantine VII's in the tenth century.

knowledge such as John's were intended to organize areas of study that were already, or were to be fully, "housed in the mind".[14] This means that John intended his work to be read and learned, and not simply referenced when needed. The *Fount of Knowledge*, when it was to finally appear as a three-part work, was expected to be read *in toto*.[15]

This is an important point, because although systematic organizations of knowledge were the norm for an encyclopedic work in John's time, it was not the only option. Other works composed around the same time as John's, such as the *Doctrina Patrum* and the *Sacra Parallela*, were not intended to be read from cover to cover. The evidence for this can be found in their structure and organization. As mentioned above, alphabetic arrangement of material was unusual, but not unheard of. Preceding the modern alphabetic encyclopedia by about a thousand years, the *Sammlung von Defenitionen*, to give it the name used by its modern editors, and which appeared in the *Doctrina Patrum* in addition to circulating independently, organized logical definitions alphabetically, thus releasing its consultant from being forced to read through the entire contents to arrive at what he needed in the moment.[16] It provided a useful way to organize an otherwise large number of logical terms that required definition, in theory before progressing on to further study, but perhaps in practice used in other ways. Perhaps even more unusually for the time, the compiler of the *Doctrina* included an index to the work, something like a modern-day table of contents guiding the consultant to find what he needed to in a particular moment.[17] The *Sacra Parallela* employs similar methods. It also has a complicated manuscript history, and may possibly come from an older three-part work re-edited in the eighth century into a single volume; thus making clear generalizations about its structure is difficult as the manuscripts vary widely as to the style of the work. One predominant theme in many recensions, however, is the organization of much of the subject matter according to the alphabet.[18]

The use of the alphabet as a tool of organization further freed the author/ editor of such works from the organization of his material around a particular

14 T. Rajan, 'The Encyclopedia and the University of Theory: Idealism and the Organization of Knowledge', *Textual Practice* 21.2 (2007), pp. 335–58.

15 For an ancient alternative, see Pliny's *Natural History*, which specifically encourages its reader to consult, rather than read it. But see Doody, 'Enkuklios Paideia and the Ancient Encyclopedia', for the limitations in referring to it, or any other early work as an 'encyclopedia' in the modern sense of that term.

16 This text is found in the *Doctrina Patrum* itself (pp. 249–66), although is known to have circulated independently in some manuscripts, for example, in cod. Vat. gr. 447, fol. 315–329.

17 See Diekamp (ed.), *Doctrina Patrum*, pp. 331–37.

18 For the *Sacra Parallela* and its structure, see Holl, *Die Sacra Parallela des Johannes Damaskenos*.

theme. But John's encyclopedia was not organized in this fashion, and in typical arrangement for that time, he expects his reader to read the work cover to cover, and he believes that his work has a particular aim. The logical definitions he offers in the *Dialectica* are prerequisites for the understanding of the Heresiology, which is a prerequisite itself for the full understanding of the *De Fide*.[19] Indeed we find evidence of John's assumption that the work depends on being read from cover to cover in the work itself. The *Dialectica*, or 'Philosophical Chapters', precede the list of heresies, and we know that at this time manuals of logic were assembled and circulated in order to offer the student of logic a basic knowledge to prepare him for further study.[20] The prologue to the work explains the order in which the work is laid out, and how it will proceed from one book to the next, and why. John clearly expects his reader to read the work from one cover to the other. We can also see this in how he explains the transition from the second book *On Heresies* to the third *On the Orthodox Faith*:

> Then, next, after this, I shall set forth in order the absurdities of the heresies hated of God, so that by recognizing the lie, we may more closely follow the truth. Then, with God's help and by His grace I shall expose the truth.[21]

The work is explained to the reader with the understanding that he will proceed from one section of it to another. Further, the lines above suggest a sense of completion indicating a work that stands on its own. This was also a characteristic feature of the early encyclopedia and its author, who sought to supersede with his work all works prior to it, and render them unnecessary.[22] Here we might see yet another difference between John's intention in *The Fount* and the intention of the authors/editors of the *Doctrina* and the *Sacra Parallela*. Given the structure, contents, and organization of the *Doctrina Patrum* and *Sacra Parallela*, we should posit these as *reference* works, or *proof-texts*, for the purposes of combating any deviance from the faith by means of consultation

19 I do not mean to suggest that the *De Fide* is incomprehensible without the *De Haeresibus*, only that it does appear to make better sense if included.

20 See the articles M. Roueché, 'Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century', *JÖB* 23 (1974), pp. 61–76, M. Roueché, 'A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology', *JÖB* 29 (1980), pp. 71–98, and M. Roueché, 'The Definitions of Philosophy and a New Fragment of Stephanus the Philosopher', *JÖB* 40 (1990), pp. 107–28.

21 Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 5.

22 Collison, *Encyclopaedias: Their History throughout the Ages*, p. 2.

when needed.[23] John's work, on the other hand, would have had additional value as a collection and codification that facilitated general theological education in a hostile environment outside of the protection of Constantinople and among the many competing forms of Christianity. It would become increasingly convenient to be able to rely on a single work to fulfill an education, and perhaps we could even imagine John's work being used as the text book in a course of study, with works like the *Doctrina Patrum* and the *Sacra Parallela* as supplementary reference tools for the concerned student looking for the proof of the *Fount's* claims.[24] The interested reader of the *Fount* was a student

23 It is suspicious that these two works, which are essentially proof-texts, some of the contents of which are arranged alphabetically, have no authorship appended to them. Rather than continuing the search for a single author for these works as others have done and failed, might it not make more sense to envision these as collective works of the Chalcedonian Christian community of Palestine, the educated members of which added to the work as more quotations applicable to the given subject were found or recalled? These were enormous works after all, and might we not at least imagine an author going around consulting other works and asking for logical definitions of the terms beginning with the letter Γ, for example, because he feared finishing his alphabetic collection without having included every relevant definition? Drafting and redrafting such expensive works would have been highly unlikely, although admittedly it does appear that John did so with his work. Such an approach, however, might help us to explain the ecclectic collections of material we find in these enormous and expensive texts. Diekamp's edition of *Doctrina* already lends itself to such a speculation. The first thirty chapters of the work are concerned with Christology, and have a clear theme, organized around different aspects of Christ's nature such as how many wills, natures, and in what the natures consisted etc., all refuting heresies common to the time. At that point, however, Diekamp admits that easy summary of the contents breaks down, as do the order of the chapters in the manuscript tradition. Why should, for example, Epiphanius' *Panarion*, or the list of names for Christ, the Theotokos, and John the Baptist—neither of which appear in all manuscript recensions of the *Doctrina*—appear in this work at all? In fact it is sometimes hard to see from looking at the contents of the recensions of the *Doctrina* why the author/editor chose to include what he did; the answer may simply lie in realizing what kind of material he had at his disposal, and understanding his concern to preserve less well-known data such as the different names used for John the Baptist or the Theotokos.

24 Mango makes it clear that books were scarce in the empire from 750–850, and very expensive. Although he suggests that manuscripts were still in supply in Palestine during this period, John's intended audience for the work he is writing extends beyond his immediate environment. See C. Mango, 'The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, AD 750–850', in C. Mango and I. Ševčenko (eds.), *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1975), pp. 29–46. A distinct limit to the argument that the *Doctrina* itself could have been envisaged as a reference work in support of John's *Fount* specifically is the considerable amount of overlapping material found in both, excepting the *De Fide*. One manuscript

of all knowledge, as John states, but the consumer of the *Doctria Patrum* and the *Sacra Parallela* were likely consultants searching for an answer to a particular question, or a quotation supporting a specific viewpoint. The question remains, however, why John felt the need to include an heresiology in the *Fount*, and how it came to pass that he felt he could include Islam in that heresiology.

Heresiology as History?

Epiphanius' heresiology was written in 377, and by the eighth century was well out of date as a full description of heresies. Heresiological composition was a work of successive generations, with each generation building on the work of the previous, often more than the latter cared to admit.[25] Perhaps as a result of the *Panarion's* dated nature, a number of other heresiologies were composed between its time and John's, although Epiphanius' work also continued to circulate, more often in the form of the *Anacephalaeosis* than as the full work.[26] Theodoret of Cyrus, Theodore of Raithu, Anastasius of Sinai, Leontius of Byzantium, and Sophronius of Jerusalem are among the many who offered listings of heresies, sometimes with descriptions of the heresies, as in the case with Leontius, and sometimes as just a list, as in the case with Sophronius.[27]

tradition even contains the *Dialectica* as an introduction to the *Doctrina* itself. See Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. I, pp. 149–73.

25 F. Wisse, 'The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology', in M. Krause (ed.), *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Bohlig* (Brill, 1972), pp. 133–43.

26 There are only eleven extant manuscripts of the *Panarion*, none of them complete, and all apparently descended from a single archetype. Holl himself considers the *Anacephalaeosis* to be spurious, as does the *Panarion's* modern translator, Williams. See K. Holl, *Die handschriftliche Uberlieferung des Epiphanius* (*Ancoratus und Panarion*) (J. C. Hinrichs, 1910), pp. 95–98. Williams has grown more confident of the same assertion between the two editions of his translation. Compare Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. xvii with F. Williams (ed.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* (2nd edn., Brill, 2009), p. xxii.

27 For Theodoret's heresiology, see PG 83, 336–437 and G. Melvin, 'An Analysis of the Theological Method of Theodoret of Cyrus in the "Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium"', (Catholic University of America, 1990) (unpublished Ph.D.). For Theodore of Raithu, see F. Diekamp, *Analecta Patristica; texte und abhandlungen zur griechischen patristik* (Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1938), pp. 185–222. For Sophronius, see P. Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-century Heresy: The Synodical Letter and other Documents: Introduction, Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (Oxford University Press, 2009). For Anastasius of Sinai, see J. B. Pitra, *Juris Ecclesiastici Graecorum Historia et Monumenta* (Bardi Editore, 1864), pp. 257–71. The work attributed

All of these heresiologies, however, list only heresies founded between the time of Christ and the present day. Although beginning a heresiology with Simon Magus had the advantage of portraying all heresy as successive of previous heresies, not all heresiologies did so, and most were far less comprehensive than the *Panarion* or its summary, perhaps indicating the recognition that some heresies had fallen out of existence and no longer required refutation. Some begin with Manichaeism, possibly indicating the perception that it was as much the source of all heresy as any.[28] None of these heresiologies, however, appear to have referred back to pre-Christian heresies, and few continued the practice of listing Jewish heresies. The question thus reasserts itself: why, given so many options, did John choose the *Anacephalaeosis* of the *Panarion* as his starting point?

The *Panarion* was in fact a kind of universal history of the world that understood heresy as something in opposition to an 'a-histoircal' orthodoxy dissociated from the processes of cultural development.[29] Using apocryphal and canonical sources, Epiphanius had effectively written the history of the world as a history of the victory of orthodoxy over the multitude of heresies. The added pressure on Epiphanius to prove Christianity's antiquity further pushed him to adduce a work demonstrating its prior originations, which he was only too glad to do by claiming that the Church's true origins lay with Adam: 'The Church has always been, but was revealed in due course by Christ's incarnation, during the period of these sects (μέσον τῶν προειρημένων αἱρέσεων).'[30]

The idea that a heresiology could be used as a kind of history is not a new one. In fact, it has been argued that the earliest heresiologies, such as those of Justin and Irenaeus are, in addition to being a means of refutation of theological alternatives, the earliest form of Christian historical writing. The same scholar assumes, however, that, as an historical form, heresiology lost out against the now more well-known form of ecclesiastical history initiated by Eusebius in his history, and that this use of heresiology disappeared by the end

---

to Anastasius has not been proven his, although it mentions Sophronius and can be dated to 692–95.

28 See for example the heresiologies of Theodore or Raithu and George the Monk, both of which start their heresiologies with Mani. Diekamp, *Analecta Patristica* (*OCA 117*), pp. 185–222 and M. Richard, 'Le traité de George Hiéromoine sur les hérésies', *REB* 28 (1970), pp. 239–69.

29 Schott, 'Heresiology as Universal History'. Although Schott appears unaware that roughly the same point was being made at the same time by Kim in his doctoral thesis at Michigan University. See Kim, 'The Imagined Worlds of Epiphanius of Cyprus', at 196–237.

30 Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, p. 156; Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 3.

of the fourth century.[31] Eusebius' model for ecclesiastical history became the accepted norm, with most successive ecclesiastical historians adopting his history in one form or another and updating it to their own day. Thus the use of heresiology as an expression of history faded against the tradition of Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Evagrius, and others, all of whom organized the ecclesiastical histories they wrote as had Eusebius. This development had not taken place, however, before Epiphanius penned his *Panarion*.

The failure of heresiology to attain the role of a history of the world for the Christian community can be witnessed in the heresiologies of Theodoret and Augustine, among others.[32] Augustine, by eliminating Philaster and Epiphanius' pre-Christian heresies, shifted the value and use of heresiolgy to other areas, most notably doctrinal ones. Theodoret, by organizing his heresies by groups according to their common traits, rejected the linear genealogical model offered in Justin and Irenaeus, and in so doing rejected any pretensions to the use of heresiology as history.[33]

By the time Theodoret wrote his heresiology in the mid-fifth century, the genre of heresiology had changed considerably, and was no longer used primarily as a means of refutation or dialogue, and heresiologies became long lists of errors with only brief descriptions accompanying them, for convenient reference.[34] This, however, did not change the general trend of listing heresies according to genealogical succession, usually beginning with Simon Magus,

31 Inglebert argues that the heresiologies of Epiphanius and Philaster are two early examples of an alternative form of ecclesiastical historical writing, but that the model of ecclesiastical history offered by Eusebius, who set the precedent for all future ecclesiastical histories, ultimately won out. Inglebert, 'L'histoire des hérésies'.

32 Inglebert, 'L'histoire des hérésies', p. 124.

33 Theodoret, as is well known, composed his own ecclesiastical history on the model of Eusebius. For Theodoret's heresiology, see Melvin, 'Analysis of the Theological Method of Theodoret of Cyrus', (unpublished Ph.D.).

34 This appears to be true especially in the Latin west. See J. Mcclure, 'Handbooks Against Heresy in the West, from the Late Fourth to the Late Sixth Centuries', *JTS* XXX (1979), pp. 186–97. Long heresiologies such as Epiphanius' similarly largely ceased in the Greek-speaking world as well, as the reduction of the *Panarion* to its summary suggests. However, there is less evidence suggesting that such summaries were particularly useful in the east for the ill-informed, as McClure's work demonstrates was the case in Rome. Theological ignorance may also have been a motivating force for the production of such epitomes in Constantinople, but it is equally likely that cost of production was another, as well as how a heresiology might be used. On the one hand Theodoret's heresiology is neither short, nor a guide for the theologically ignorant, while the inclusion of an heresiology in the Synodical letter of Sophronius of Jerusalem served an altogether different function, on which see Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-century Heresy*, pp. 34–64.

and continuing down roughly chronologically to the present. Theodoret's own heresiology was different however, and shows that other options were available; his grouping of heresies according to kind looks much like the attempts at heresiology made by Clement, Origen, and Pseudo-Tertullian.[35]

Historical writing among Greek speakers, whether taking the form of the historical chronicle, or the ecclesiastical history, all but disappeared from existence in the late seventh and early eighth centuries.[36] Scholars have struggled to understand the considerable decline in historical writing in the period in which John wrote. Suggested reasons for this disappearance have varied, and include the decline in the intelligentsia capable of producing historical works, the loss of provincial wealth previously used to produce such works as a result of the empire's military defeats, a decreased awareness and loss of contact with the past during the period, and a lack of interest in recording the losses of territories of the empire.[37]

Most of these reasons have greater applicability if we consider the end of historical writing within the empire's borders. For example, in Palestine, as has been observed, the financial resources were clearly still available to produce literature more generally even after the conquests, and highly educated people such as John were capable of writing such a history, as were others.[38]

---

35 For the distinct nature of Theodoret's heresiology in the fifth century, see H. Sillett, 'Orthodoxy and Heresy in Theodoret of Cyrus' Compendium of Heresies', in S. Elm, É. Rebillard, and A. Romano (eds.), *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, Histoire = Orthodoxy, Christianity, History* (École Française de Rome, 2000), pp. 261–73. Sillett unfortunately seems unaware that Theodoret was not the first to organize a heresiology according to doctrinal theme, something which could certainly be viewed as a carry-over from pre-Christian heresiology. Of the three listed above along with Theodoret, Clement is the most explicit in why he associates heresies with each other according to doctrine. He uses a methodology I discuss briefly below, and in circulation in Neoplatonic pagan circles, in which 'heresies' were divided according to seven different kinds. For Clement, see A. Le Boulluec (ed.), *Les stromates VII* (Editions du Cerf, 1997), ch. 17.

36 See M. Whitby, 'Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality', in L. I. Conrad and A. Cameron (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 25–80, Cameron, 'New Themes and Styles', and A. Cameron, 'New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature, A Title Revisited', in S. F. Johnson (ed.), *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Ashgate, 2006), pp. 11–28.

37 The suggestions are reviewed by Whitby, ibid.

38 For a useful survey of some of the literature produced in the period by both Melkites and other Christians in the now conquered territories, see S. H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 23–44.

The idea that contact was lost with the past perhaps holds more traction in the conquered territories, but the chronicles of John Malalas (c. 490–c. 575) and Evagrius Scholasticus (c. 535–c. 600) clearly still circulated, as John of Damascus knew them and used them in his works.[39] What is different about the situation outside the empire is that Christians there had to come to terms with the new idea that God's providence did not manifest itself in the geographical acquisition of lands for the empire. This idea would perhaps have taken some time to seep into the consciousness of Romans in John's position, but the unchanging status of these Christians year on year created an impetus for an alternative to the older theory that the Christian *Oikoumene* was realized in the political success of the state. Indeed, at first the explanation that Christian sin was responsible for the disaster prevailed, but as time passed, Apocalyptic prediction was married to Christian deviation as the real cause for failure, and Christians and the imperial political authorities gradually began to paint a picture that the end times were near, during which the last of all great challenges to God's protected community had appeared, the instigators of which would in due time be conquered.[40]

In such an encyclopedia as John's was intended to be, covering 'all knowledge', John's offering in his heresiology serves as an alternative form of the history of the world, written as a triumph of Christianity over error, whether theological, or 'pagan' philosophical. It is important in this regard to recall that although John probably wrote his work before the coming of Iconoclasm, he likely wrote after when we believe policies of Arabization of the Caliphate were taking place in the early years of the eighth century. John and his fellow Christians were coming to accept that the Arabs were there to stay, and they had to explain under what circumstances imperial authority would return. How was the absence of imperial authority to be explained if the Roman emperors were the only legitimate rulers of the inhabited world, a world in which they no longer took part? Military success tended to generate historical

39 John uses the Chronicle of Malalas in his third book on Images, and he uses Evagrius' Ecclesiastical History in the *De Fide* in chapter 89, lines 51–56.

40 Sophronius of Jerusalem and Anastasius of Sinai are among the earliest authors to explain their new situation to their peoples as a consequence of Christian sin. Olster traces the nature of this development in political circles within the empire, and shows how imperial authorities increasingly made space for the temporary role of the Arabs as initiators of the end times and increasingly asserted their role in the sacerdotal realm as protectors of an orthodoxy under siege. See D. Olster, 'Ideological Transformation and the Evolution of Imperial Presentation in the Wake of Islam's Victory', in E. Grypeou, M. Swanson, and D. Thomas (eds.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Brill, 2006), pp. 45–71.

narratives, but what kind of historical narrative could we expect in the wake of military defeat, and indeed written by those under occupation? If we see in *The Fount* an encyclopedia of all knowledge, an heresiology encompassing all forms of belief and opinion works as a perfect substitution for an ecclesiastical history. An ecclesiastical history would have to explain why the Christians were no longer in power, but an heresiological history could side-step this question as it witnessed to the enduring legacy of Christianity and its historical continuity throughout the history of the world, from before the empire's very existence, until after its temporary disappearance.[41]

In this respect, John's *De Fide* mirrors the *De Haeresibus* in that both end with points of eschatological explanation. The Ishmaelites are described as the 'forerunners to the Antichrist' in the hundredth chapter of *On Heresies*, and in the hundredth chapter of the *De Fide*, John ends by explaining how the Antichrist is to be overcome: "And so, with our souls again united to our bodies, which will have become incorrupt and put off corruption, we shall rise again and stand before the terrible judgment seat of Christ. And the Devil and his demons, and his man, which is to say, the Antichrist, and the impious and sinners will be given over to everlasting fire, which will not be a material fire such as we are accustomed to, but a fire such as God might know."[42]

In order to justify to the Christians that the truth of Christianity could claim a greater antiquity than that of the Ishmaelites, the use of an heresiology which dated to the foundations of the world aided in the illustration of this point. Part

41 Unknown to me until a very late date in my research, Mr. Jesse Hoover at Baylor University has simultaneously explored the idea that the *De Fide* is a kind of 'salvation history'. He sees in the *De Fide* a history of God's plan of salvation for mankind. In contrast to prior commentators on the *De Fide*, Hoover envisages the *De Fide* as a work divided roughly into six parts, more or less following a chronological framework of: 1. Trinity (as it always existed) ch. 1–14; 2. Creation, ch. 15–42; 3. Fall, ch. 43–45; 4. Dispensation, 46–81; 5. Practice and Polemic, ch. 82–98; 6. Eschatology, ch. 99–100. Hoover admits that parts of this schema are not perfect, but argues well that this format best explains the arrangement of the *De Fide* in a manner no one thus far has managed to do. He argues, against Louth, that the final 19 chapters of the work do contain an internal unity, and that John deliberately orders the *De Fide* according to a 'linear progression of history, or, more properly, of the divine economy'. Hoover's work has concentrated on the internal theological logic of the *De Fide*, and he has not sought to explain in his paper *why* the Damascene appears to be working to introduce history into his theology, the point with which I am concerned above. I thank Mr. Hoover for a copy of the paper that he presented at the Pappas Patristics Institute's annual conference in Boston, March 2011. His findings accord well with my own suggestions here.

42 Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. II, p. 238, ln. 123–28; Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 406.

of Epiphanius' project, as has already been noted, was to present a universal history of heresies. Indeed, his work is an alternative form of historical writing, offering a history of the world from creation up to his own day.[43] This work, in its condensed form, is what appears in John's *Fount of Knowledge*, there updated to reflect the relevant historical activities having taken place since the time of Epiphanius. This helps explain why John included outdated heresies in the book such as Donatism, not necessarily having much value for the contemporary reader.[44] It also helps explain why some of the other heresies appearing in the book may not have had identifiable organizations.[45] John wanted to write a century and saw, along with many in his time, the Ishmaelites as the final bringers of an alternative system of faith and communal order into the political sphere of the empire. Placing them in the hundredth and last position accorded well with the common belief at the time that they were initiators of the coming Apocalypse.[46] They are a part of the universal history of the world, and their presence is required to fulfill his encyclopedic intentions and offer his reader 'every sort of knowledge'.[47]

What was needed in the sectarian milieu of eighth-century Palestine was not another chronicle of world history, but a sketch of the beliefs of the multitude of sects that had come into existence, and an explanation reassuring the Christian community that Christianity was the only truth. Theodore Abu Qurra's work on the nature of the True Religion written not more than 50 years after John composed his works is illustrative of this point. Theodore paints a picture of himself as a man coming down a mountain encountering the

43 See Schott, 'Heresiology as Universal History' and Kim, 'The Imagined Worlds of Epiphanius of Cyprus'.

44 Heresies such as that of the Eutychians (82), and especially the Donatists (95), and the Lampetians (98), might be seen as having taken place so long ago that they need hardly warrant further refutation in John's own day.

45 For example, the *Heliotropites* (Heresy 89) who are said to believe that certain plants have a virtue in them thus requiring the adherents of this heresy to worship them, are not known from any other source.

46 That the the Ishamaelites were seen as harbingers of the Apocalypse has been well studied. The most important work coming down to us from this period depicting this attitude is the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, but it was certainly not the only one. See G. J. Reinink (ed.), *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* 2 vols. (Peeters, 1993), idem., 'Ps.-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam', and more generally, P. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (University of California Press, 1985).

47 See above, and Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 10.

adherents of one religion after another, each of which he is invited to join.[48] He meets at least nine different religious groups, some of them having appeared before Christianity, some of them after. Each group in turn explains their beliefs to him, attempting to persuade him of the truth of theirs. At the end of the short treatise, Theodore explains that the Gospel alone offers the saving truth and reveals the true God who is Christ. In other words a multitude of religious perspectives is presented to the reader of the work and, as Theodore tells his reader at the end of the work, "we cast aside all other religions, push them away and drive them off, counting them as nothing."[49] Theodore's work is not a chronicle, of course, but employs much of the same methodology as does an heresiology, by depicting a multitude of alternative religious belief systems, contrasting them to Christianity. As with John, Theodore does not limit himself to groups after Christ's coming, and instead deals with pagans, Jews, Samaritans, and others. More on Theodore's work will be said in chapter five, but some parallels to John's work are clear; the full range of religious alternatives are presented to be refuted, and Christianity is contrasted to all of them, regardless of how they came into existence.

The Sociological Imperative to Institution Building as a Force for Islam's Inclusion

Attempting to present all knowledge systematically served the crucial function of institution building for the Melkite Church in eighth-century Palestine. It has been asserted that John of Damascus, along with the other Christians loyal to the Christianity expressed by the Empire, must have had a considerable 'crisis of identity' as a result of his circumstances.[50] If so, nothing would have been more needed than the building up of the Church's institutional structure, as institutions confer identity, partly by bestowing sameness.[51] But institutional authority is represented in the sameness described as differentiated from others by means of classification and identification of the other. It is institutions that do the classifying, and institutions that take many of our

48 J. C. Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah* (Brigham Young University Press, 2005), pp. 1–25.

49 Ibid., p. 23.

50 The claim is made by Averil Cameron in 'New Themes and Styles', pp. 86–88.

51 M. Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), pp. 55–67.

major decisions.[52] That which does a considerable amount of classifying presents itself as an institution. In order to be an authoritative institution in the new Byzantino-Islamic world one had to be capable of claiming both institutional priority and institutional totality.

John's heresiology, in the context of the whole of *The Fount*, works effectively as a *reductio ad absurdum*, to which he himself calls attention at the beginning of his work. "Then next, after this, I shall set forth in order the absurdities of the heresies hated of God, so that by recognizing the lie we may more closely follow the truth. Then, with God's help and by His grace I shall expose the truth—that truth which destroys deceit and puts falsehood to flight …"[53] The process by which the full historical market of alternative possibilities is excluded, so that that which remains must be the truth was not possible without the inclusion of the beliefs of the Ishmaelites in his heresiology, regardless of whether or not they satisfied typical traditional criteria for heresy.

Modern sociologists have taught us that one of the ways we build institutions is by asserting the rightness or wrongness of certain ideas, and passing blame on wrong thinking. Part of the means by which we build our institutions is by squeezing each other's different ideas into a common shape, whereby we can assert something's rightness or wrongness on the basis of numbers of independent assent to the proposition.[54] By choosing Epiphanius' heresiology as the framework from which he built his own heresiology, John simultaneously re-asserted his local church's claim to universal authority from the first days of creation until the present day, and endowed the claim that Islam was 'heresy' with an already established majority opinion. Epiphanius' heresiology was already well known, and using it served the necessary purpose of condemning a group categorically.

Some of the Melkite Church's institutional and social power was drawn from its ability to classify, which classification, in turn, aided in the building of that institution. As institutions confer identity—and in eighth century Syria-Palestine, little was more pressing than the need for institutional identity, fragmented as Christianity was between different claimants to the truth of Christ added to which was a new claim made by an outsider—it was crucial to provide the faith community with a refutation of all alternatives, including Islam.

52 In *How Institutions Think*, Mary Douglas describes both how latent groups survive, and how different kinds of institutions enable or require different kinds of thoughts. In the last chapter of the book she persuasively argues that institutions often even make life and death decisions for us (pp. 111–28).

53 Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 5.

54 Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, p. 91.

It was necessary to 'squeeze' Islam into the common shape of 'heresy', as doing so allowed the Melkite community both to assert its own authority, and protect itself from defection of its members.[55]

Additionally, while social concerns drive demand for explanation, thinkers have a tendency to fall back on received, and therefore comfortable, analogies in order to help do some explaining for them.[56] When the energy to construct independent classificatory systems runs out, the thinker reverts to using pre-established models of classification.[57] Thus, in John's case, heresiology, as an accepted and available tool was ready to hand, and using it to characterize a faith system whose adherents were in a dominant position in a highly pluralistic environment was highly convenient, and one of the crucial mediums for building identity. The composition of an heresiology aided in the conferring of an 'orthodox' identity to John, and those for whom he wrote. Islam's inclusion in the heresiology is a natural consequence of the need to establish institutional authority and independent identity.

From Heresiology to Panarion and from Panarion to Anacephalaeosis: The Shifting Nature of Heresiology

If I have managed to show why John included an heresiology in his work, and what impetus might have led him to feel it necessary to include Islam in such a work, it remains necessary to show how he overcame the conceptual hurdles for the understanding of what constituted 'heresy' among the theologically aware, and in violation of at least the three typical features of heresy offered above in chapter one.[58] Interestingly, two of the three features highlighted above already experience a remarkable recession in the heresiology of

55 Douglas again shows that in order for latent groups to survive, the leadership of such a group sometimes must resort to starker threats in order to control its borders. The charge of 'heresy' is certainly one such loaded term that would have resonated with Christian communities. Ibid., pp. 31–43.

56 Ibid., pp. 55–67.

57 Ibid., pp. 66–67.

58 I do not pretend that these were the only conceptual hurdles that one might plausibly claim John would have needed to overcome in order to include Islam in his understanding of heresy. Another to which attention might clearly be drawn, and which I will mention briefly in the conclusion, is the issue of succession so central to early heresiologists. It would be hard to explain how John saw Islam or Muhammad as descended in the genealogical tree of heresy, although as I have said above, he does at least appear to pay lip service to this feature of heresy by linking, albeit weakly, Muhammad to Arius.

Epiphanius of Salamis. A willful departure from the Church and the role of the demons as instigators of heresy appear to be at least partly lacking in the *Panarion*, the more so in sections of that work written by Epiphanius himself, and not simply reproduced by him from portions of Irenaeus or Hippolytus. These recessions are even greater when we consider the *Anacephalaeosis* of the *Panarion*, which circulated considerably more than the *Panarion* itself.[59]

From the fourth century we begin to find some difficulty in applying the received picture of heresy as a willful departure from the Church in some of our authors and indeed there was considerably more variation in the use of the term and its application in the field of heresiology than is generally allowed for. By this time several generations had effectively grown up 'in heresy', and this led to a questioning of what it meant to be a heretic, as one of the prior definitions involved a voluntary association with heresy. Ecclesiastical writers such as Augustine and Epiphanius are two of several to exhibit a lost sense of security over the identity of those who deserve the title of heretic. But, as already mentioned, they approached the problem in two strikingly different ways, creating potentially crucial differences for future Christian heresiologists east and west.

We might understand the disparate ways Augustine and Epiphanius refined their respective definitions of heresy as an attempt to address the social phenomenon of multigenerational heresy. Attempting to cope with the new phenomenon of people brought up in a group with a non-conforming ideology, Epiphanius either reverted to or latched onto a more traditional and expansive understanding of heresy capable of incorporating not only the children of heretics, but pre-Christian gropus as well. Similarly we might understand Augustine's desire to contract the working definition even further as another means to coping with the same phenomenon.[60] From the second Proemium of Epiphanius' *Panarion* we read: "I will give as many arguments, like antidotes, as I can in short compass—or two at most—to counteract their poison and, after the Lord, to save who wills, when he has voluntarily or involuntarily [ἑκουσίαν

59 Evidence for this is found in the use made of the *Anacephalaeosis* by authors such as Augustine, John of Damascus, and even Theodore Bar Koni, as opposed to the scant manuscript transmission we have for the full text of the *Panarion*, which exists complete today in only one manuscript.

60 Augustine's struggle to cope with a definition of heresy is explicit, and I have partly outlined it above. Augustine also sought to devote a whole book to the subject of what made heretic a heretic, and in which consisted heresy precisely, but he died before he could do so. See Teske (ed.), *Arianism and Other Heresies by Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 15–21.

γνώμην καὶ ἀκουσίαν] fallen into the snakelike teachings of the sects."[61] To fall 'involuntarily' [ἀκουσίαν] from the Church into a heresy was not something up to now one could easily claim to have done. Something has clearly shifted in Epiphanius' mind regarding the nature of heresy, and from a brief reading of the rest of his heresiology, it is not difficult to guess what.

Epiphanius' heresiology included heresies that had existed since the creation of the world. His view of heresy was thus quite unusual for a Christian. Unfortunately, Epiphanius left little clue as to why he understood heresy in this way, either in the *Ancoratus*, where he provides only a brief explanation of the numbers of heresies to be found before and after Christ, along with a list of them, or in the *Panarion*.[62] Was he hearkening back to classical models of heresiography that included philosophical groups, or had he done this to facilitate his purpose in telling a history of the world? As we have seen above, Epiphanius pushed back the founding of the Church to Adam and the Creation, which facilitated applying the term 'heresy' to anyone outside the orthodox Church. While other heresiologists applied the term to recent defections from the Church or at least rejection of it since the coming of Christ, Epiphanius could apply it to anyone outside orthodoxy.[63] However, the idea that the whole

61 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 13.

62 Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, pp. 20–22. Although Epiphanius does not offer reasons for his inclusion of these heresies before Christ, he is specific about the numbers of heresies that arose at different time in the *Ancoratus* and *Panarion*. For example, he points out in chapter 12 of the *Ancoratus* that there were five heresies before the law, four others from the Greeks, and eleven heresies that have arisen between the time of Moses and Christ, for a total of 20 pre-Christian heresies. A similar accounting is made in the *Panarion*.

63 Lyman sees in the *Panarion* a conscious attempt by Epiphanius to turn attention toward the 'internal error' found in the Church, as opposed to earlier heresiologists such as Irenaeus who, she claims, were combatants of external error. However, I do not see the evidence in her argument convincing. Apart from the fact that Irenaeus was certainly concerned with internal error (see the quotation above regarding what Irenaeus thought heresy was), she cites Epiphanius' *De Fide* 13.3–9 as proof that Epiphanius knew the Church was mixed with heretics. That Epiphanius thought so is no doubt true, but the evidence to which she points highlights the Arians specifically, and does not speak to the other sects. In the same section, Epiphanius points to those who have followed their own path and compares them to 'those without number', an allusion to the youth in the Song of Songs. However, Epiphanius' allusion to this group is apart from his discussion of the 80 sects which he compares to the concubines in the Song of Songs more specifically. Although I share the opinion that he intends to apply the term *hairesis* to both groups, I do not see in Epiphanius a greater concern for 'internal' as opposed to 'external' error. More to the point, however, is that Lyman does not adduce much evidence in her article

world at his time could have voluntarily defected from the Church was absurd, and so it was necessary for him to broaden his definition of what constituted heresy to those who found themselves associated with bodies outside orthodoxy even involuntarily.

Augustine, however, took a fundamentally different approach, and restricted the use of the term heresy even more than previous heresiologists. Likewise confronted with the generations of people raised in heterodoxy, he limited the heresies to those belief systems which developed only after the coming of Christ and in opposition to him, and the term 'heretic' only to those who voluntarily maintained their association with such groups.[64] Augustine's influence was limited in the Greek-speaking east, but his heresiology dominated in the Latin-west.[65] This was by far the way the term was more commonly applied, although variation continued to persist.

Furthermore, although heresiologies following that of Epiphanius tended to focus on a use of the term heresy that precluded the inclusion of pre-Christian heresies in those heresiologies, alternative working understandings of the term continued to circulate, even among Christians. Thus, in Theodoret's commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:19, where Paul says that, "there must be factions (αἱρέσεις) among you so that those who are genuine among you may be recognized", Theodoret states: "He speaks of contentious factions, not differences in doctrine."[66] Yet, perhaps more surprisingly, even if deviation in doctrine was received as the meaning, by the end of the sixth century, among the many polemical works directed against various heresies in different heresiological collections, one finds ecclesiastical historians who still offered a much more tempered view of heresy. Evagrius Scholasticus, composing his history in 593, wrote the following opinion about heresy into his history:

> For we, while searching for the ineffable and inscrutable benevolence of God, and wishing to revere it especially and elevate it, are turned this

---

for her claim, but mainly bases her argument on the fact that Epiphanius has adopted the language of illness and cure in his *Panarion*, which to her indicates that Epiphanius sees the heresies as sicknesses within the body in need of healing. I find the evidence for this similarly unconvincing. Epiphanius refers to the illnesses as things caused by something outside the body, such as a snake or scorpion. It can easily be argued, therefore, that these represent the evil sects that come from outside and attempt to poison members of the body. See Lyman, 'Ascetics and Bishops'.

64 See above in chapter 1, and *St. Augustine: Letters*, 222.2 and 43.1.

65 There are at least 80 extant codices of Augustine's *De Haeresibus.* See CCSL 46, pp. 266–70.

66 PG 82, trans. R. C. Hill (ed.), *Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul* 2 vols. (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), p. 206.

> way and that. And no one of those who have devised heresies among the Christians originally wanted to blaspheme, or stumbled through wishing to dishonor the divinity, but rather by supposing to speak better than their predecessor if he were to advocate this. And the essential and vital points are commonly agreed by all: for what we worship is a trinity and what we glorify a unity, and God the Word, though born before the ages, was incarnated in a second birth out of pity for creation. But if certain innovations have been made concerning some other things, these too have come about by our savior God's concession to free will even in these matters, so that the holy universal and apostolic Church might rather, from one side and from the other, make what has been said captive to propriety and piety, and come to one smoothed and straight path. For this reason, indeed, it was said by the apostle, with exceeding great clarity: 'It is necessary that there also be heresies among us, in order that the reputable people be made manifest.'[67]

That doctrinal heresy itself was always viewed as exclusively evil among Greek-speaking Christians is clearly not the case.[68]

The conception of what constituted heresy thus expanded and contracted to fit the needs of the particular author. The author's concern was first and foremost to protect the local community both from internal and external dissent, and to convert, or re-convert the heretic. The variation seen above notwithstanding, the definition Basil offered in his letter continued to exert considerable force, as evidenced by its inclusion in the *Nomokanon* issued in the seventh century, thereby granting it a privileged canonical status among definitions.[69]

Turning to another apparent difference in heresy in the *Panarion* and other works, the demons also experience a reduced role in the formation of heresy, and this perhaps has been overlooked in earlier studies. In the first place, it is interesting that Epiphanius appears to regard Christ's incarnation and the beginning of his ministry as signaling the end of heresy, rather than the beginning

67 M. Whitby (ed.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 30–31. Evagrius cites 1 Corinthians 11:19.

68 Evagrius' reference to 'those who have devised heresies among the Christians' may imply that he was aware that those who were not Christians might have their own 'heresies', but the text cannot be definitively read to prove the point.

69 Deferrari and Mcguire (eds.), *Saint Basil: The Letters*, vol. III, letter 188.1. The letter was included in the *Nomokanon in XIV tit.* (Pitra, *Juris Ecclesiastici Graecorum Historia et Monumenta*) as tit. 12.1.

of it. While he goes on to acknowledge that heresies sprang up quickly after the coming of Christ, he has this to say when Christ sends his disciples out into the world immediately following his resurrection:

> And he met with them in reality, not appearance, and by his instruction taught them to proclaim the kingdom of heaven in truth. He indicated the greatest and supreme <mystery> to his disciples and said, "Make disciples of the nations"—that is, convert the nations from wickedness to truth, from sects to one unity—"baptizing them in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit."[70]

This quotation demonstrates that for Epiphanius, there is something characteristically different about the heresies following Christ's ministry to those preceding it. This is further emphasized by Epiphanius' excursus into the Incarnation after the first twenty heresies and his continued reference to the twenty before Christ's coming.[71] We are further able to see in the early parts of the *Panarion* that Epiphanius' conception of heresy is an historical one, and he describes the earliest heresies as periods of time in creation's history. Barbarism is described as a period of time of ten generations from Adam to just after the flood. "But there was no difference of opinion yet, no people that was at all different, no name for a sect, and no idolatry either. Since everyone followed his own opinion, however, the name 'Barbarism' was given to the era then, during the ten generations."[72] The same can be said of his characterizations of several of the earliest heresies.

In an interesting passage in his refutation of the Sethians, Epiphanius makes this division more explicit by characterizing the devil's activity before and after the coming of Christ. Prior to the coming of Christ, the devil tempted and tricked men into following idols and committing other sins, but after Christ he tempted men to follow himself.

> But it is amazing to see how he deceived man with many absurdities, and dragged him down to transgression, to fornication, adultery and incontinence, to madness for idols, sorcery and bloodshed, to rapine and insatiate greed, to trickery and gluttony, and any number of such things—yet never before Christ's coming did he venture to utter a blasphemy against his own master, or think of open rebellion. For he was awaiting Christ's

70 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, pp. 52–53.

71 Ibid., pp. 50–54.

72 Ibid., p. 14.

> coming, as he says, "It is written of thee that he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up." He had always heard the prophets proclaim the coming of Christ and that there would be a redemption of those who had sinned and yet repented through Christ, and he expected to find some mercy. But when he unfortunately saw that Christ had not accepted his turnaround regarding salvation, he opened his mouth against his own Master and spewed the blasphemy out, and gave men a notion to deny their actual Master but seek the non-existent one.[73]

Epiphanius admits the devil's activity in men's affairs before the coming of Christ, but limits it considerably. It is only after Christ's coming, it would seem, that the demons are permitted to tempt man away from Christ to following them. The further extent which the devil plays in human affairs is not often revisited by Epiphanius, and this limitation of interest is even more limited when the *Panarion* is reduced to its summary.

Epiphanius' view of heresy is worth expanding on a little, not least because his definition appears broader than what we usually find in our sources, and because after all it was the summary of his work that formed the basis for John's heresiology. Deciphering how Epiphanius used the term, however, has given scholars difficulty, even leading some to ask if even Epiphanius himself knew what he meant by heresy.[74] While he does not provide us with a definition of the term as John of Damascus did, his use of it in several places provides insight into his understanding. For example, he writes, 'καὶ τῶν [αἵρεσεως] μὲν τὰς ῥίζας καὶ τὰ διδάγματα ἐξ ἀκριβοῦς ἀπαγγελίας ἀποδοῦναι πεπιστεύκαμεν, τῶν δὲ μέρος τι τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς γινομένων.'[75] Thus it is clear that in Epiphanius' mind, an αἵρεσις can both have teachings (διδάγματα) and 'have events' or 'do things' (γινομένων). For this reason Williams, in his translation of the *Panarion*, considered the word 'sect' to be a more suitable translation of the word for most occurrences in English instead of 'heresy', reserving the latter for times

73 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, pp. 260–61.

74 See Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. xxiv and E. Montsoulas, 'Der Begriff "Haresis" bei Epiphanius von Salamis', *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 92 (1963), pp. 362–71. Also, F. M. Young, 'Did Epiphanius Know What He Meant by "Heresy"?' *StPatr* 17.1 (1982), pp. 199–205.

75 Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, p. 170; Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 12. 'I am confident that I can give an account of some "sects" origins and teachings from accurate report, and of part of the things which others do.'

when context dictates.[76] In the introduction to his translation of the *Panarion*, Williams quotes the statement made by Epiphanius that the 'αἵρεσις of the Basilideans is a μύθος (myth)'. Here Williams uses 'heresy' in his translation, presumably because to translate that 'the sect of the Basilideans is a myth', makes little sense in English. For Epiphanius, 'αἵρεσις', as far as it has teachings, carries ideological content, describing a school of thought or following.

It is also clear that Epiphanius did not always employ the term derogatively, but often merely adjectively. Cameron has written that Epiphanius uses the term in the pejorative sense, but this is not always so.[77] As I have shown above, the neutral sense of αἵρεσις persisted until well after Epiphanius wrote his *Panarion* around 374. As Williams has noted, "The rendering of αἵρεσις is further complicated by the fact that Epiphanius uses this word for each of the eighty divisions of the *Panarion*, where we might say 'section' or 'chapter.'"[78] Many of Epiphanius' 'heresies' are descriptions of the groups he labels, but which he makes no attempt to refute. The Pythagoreans, Platonists, and Epicureans are examples of such groups which, while coming under the heading of 'heresy', are only described, and not attacked or refuted. When Epiphanius attempts to refute a 'heresy', he employs the preposition 'κατά' prior to entitling the heresy, and it is for this reason that Williams translated this preposition as 'against', understanding Epiphanius as having particular motivations to refute those 'heresies' he so prefaces.[79]

Thus Epiphanius' use of the term is somewhat elusive and perhaps not always consistent. The word can be accusatory, but also simply descriptive. In addition to alternating between meanings of the word, he sometimes refers to certain heresies as schisms (σχίσμα), thus using the two words synonymously. He refers to the 'Melitians' as 'an Egyptian Schism', as well as speaking of the 'Audian Schism', and goes so far as to specifically call attention to the fact that neither of these are 'αἵρεσις'.[80] Yet both are two of his eighty 'heresies', at least as far as he is concerned in his introductory letter, where he writes of his work, "ὅπερ ἐστὶ διὰ βιβλίων τριῶν συγγραφέν, <περι> ἔχον αἱρέσεις ὀγδοήκοντα".[81] Where

76 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. xxiv.

77 Cameron, 'How to Read Heresiology', p. 488f.

78 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. xxv.

79 Ibid.

80 See Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80* (2nd edn., Akademie-Verlag, 1985), p. 2, ln. 3–5 for the Melitians: 'Μελιτιανοί, οἱ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, σχίσμα ὄντες ἀλλ' οὐχ αἵρεσις.' and Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80*, p. 230, ln. 4 for the Audians: 'Αὐδιανῶν ἀφηνιασμὸς καὶ σχίσμα, οὐ μέντοι αἵρεσις.'

81 Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, p. 155, ln. 16–17. 'It is a book of three parts, containing eighty "heresies".'

heresy began and schism ended was a line not precisely drawn in the ancient world, and the two terms were often used interchangeably.[82]

Epiphanius' treatment of the 'Audians' offers strong evidence of this, as he appears generally well disposed towards them. Speaking of their founder he writes, "Audius was from Mesopotamia and eminent in his homeland for the purity of his life, for godly zeal, and for faith … Besides his admirable confession of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the sense of the catholic church, and his maintaining of the rest with complete orthodoxy, his whole manner of life was admirable."[83] Epiphanius has some minor criticisms of the manner in which the Audians interpret how man is made in God's image, and the time when the Audians celebrate Passover. But overall his description is positive, leaving his reader to think that the group has gone wrong more for its zeal and ignorance, than out of any mal intent. Speaking of a group of Audians still active after their leader Audius' death, he writes, "In fact this body is absolutely outstanding in its admirable conduct, and all their customs are well regulated in their monasteries, except for these points of contention, the difference in their Passover and their ignorant profession of the doctrine of the divine image."[84] We are some distance from the "wild animals and snakes" Epiphanius calls the heresies in his Preface.[85] The positive light in which the Audians are generally portrayed does not detract from the fact that for Epiphanius they are still in error, but does cast a considerable shadow over too biased an understanding of 'αἵρεσις'.

The criteria for meeting heresy seem to have encompassed any group which he perceived as having a name of its own. At the end of his discussion of the Audians, Epiphanius writes about the heresies, "But I think that is enough about this group in its turn. Once more, I shall pass them by and investigate the rest, so as to omit nothing about the divisions, splits, differences, and

---

82 As Jaroslav Pelikan has written, "Yet such a way of speaking about heresy and schism and of distinguishing between these terms can be misleading, because it seems to suggest a considerably greater measure of consistency and precision in the usage of these two words than is borne out by careful scrutiny of the patristic sources, whether Latin or Greek." And later: "Although some version of the distinction between heresy and schism would therefore seem to possess considerable validity, the distinction can be seen as artificial in several important respects." J. Pelikan and V. R. Hotchkiss, *Creeds & Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 4 vols. (Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 288–92.

83 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, p. 403; Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80*, p. 233, ln. 3–5.

84 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, p. 417; Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80*, p. 247, ln. 31–34.

85 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 3; Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, p. 154, ln. 18.

schisms, which have arisen in the world. For even though they are not that much changed in faith and different in behavior, if I can help it I am still not going to omit any separate group which has its own name."[86] This understanding of 'heresy' allows Epiphanius to incorporate a great many groups into his work that have nothing to do with Christianity, but of which he has heard, and from which he wishes to protect his readers.

It may also be worth noting that Epiphanius could also apply the term to groups that were post-Christ creations, but that had never been Christian.[87] The inclusion of heresies that existed before Christ and those that had never heard of Christ makes it unlikely Epiphanius held the same terminology for heresy as did, for example, Origen, who wrote that, "All heretics at first are believers; then later they swerve from the rule of faith."[88] At the very least, in addition to those who have actively departed from Christ, those who live with ideas ignorant of Christ or schismatic from the church he branded with the broad label of 'αἵρεσις'.[89]

Epiphanius' use of the word covers a variety of meanings, but it is to the ideological content to which we should be attentive, as this is what most clearly influences John of Damascus. This is because what appears to have happened in the *Anacephalaeosis*, and subsequently in John's work, is that the root causes

86 Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, p. 418. "Ἀλλ' ἕως ὧδε ἱκανῶς καὶ περὶ τούτων ἔχειν ἡγοῦμαι· οὗς παρελθὼν πάλιν τὰ ἑξῆς διασκοπήσω, ἵνα μή τι παραλείψω τῶν εἰς διαιρέσεις τε καὶ τομὰς καὶ εἰς διαστάσεις καὶ εἰς σχίσματα ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ συμβεβηκότων. εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ πίστει οὐκ ἂν μεταλλάττοιεν καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ τοσοῦτον, ἀλλ' ὅμως πᾶν τὸ διαιρεθὲν καὶ ἐν βίῳ ὀνομαζόμενον ὑφ' ἡμῶν κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν οὐ παραλειφθήσεται." Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80*, p. 249, ln. 3–8.

87 See for example the Ossaeans (Sect 19), who began as a pre-Christian 'αἵρεσις' described as practicing Judaism, but no longer, and joined the Ebionites and the Sampsaeans (Sects 30 and 53). Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, pp. 333–82 and K. Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64* (2nd edn., Akademie-Verlag, 1980), pp. 314–17. Bauer's argument is generally directed to the church in the first three centuries, and thus evidence supporting or refuting it is difficult to come by. This passage from Epiphanius, however, dating to the fourth century would seem to imply that there were those at an early period of the Church's development who did not think in the way that Bauer suggests, and that it was sometimes possible for churchmen such as Epiphanius to view groups of people who passed from 'un-belief' to 'wrong belief' without passing through 'right belief'. For Bauer's assessment of how the early church viewed heresy, based at least in part off of Origen's, see Bauer, Kraft, and Krodel, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, p. xxiii.

88 Cited above on p. 24.

89 Epiphanius follows a similar pattern at the end of his work in his *De Fide*, in which Hinduism, Shamanism, and others are further examples of heresies. Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80*, pp. 511–12.

for the heresies appear to have dropped out of the catalogue, while the difference in opinions among men have remained. The demons, willful resistance to Christ, and even philosophical speculation as causes are all absent, and as such the underlying *causes* have been subjugated to the ideological or epistemological differences of opinion.[90] This of course does not mean that John or the author of the *Anacephalaeosis* did not share the views that these all cause heresy, but it does mean that the *Panarion* in general, and the *Anacephalaeosis* in particular, serve as a perfect background heresiology for the inclusion of Islam in a list of heresies. The attention paid to the differences of opinion, at the expense of a more general theory of heresy or even specific explanations for how the heresy arose, facilitates the inclusion of other differences of opinion among men from Christianity, regardless of cause.

John of Damascus and non-Christian Philosophy

Given what we have said above, it perhaps will come as little surprise to the reader that John's use of heresiology contains some notable differences in function to that of other heresiologists, and that these differences might help explain the result that his understanding of heresy broadened in such a way as to include Islam within its bounds. While I have already emphasized above John's use of heresiology as history, his desire to be 'encyclopedic' in his coverage of material, and his limited departure from the convention of listing heresies as a succession one from another, the three characteristics of heresy on which I elaborated in chapter 1 can also be shown to recess considerably in John's work. Taking them in a slightly different order, the ideas that the study of non-Christian philosophy led to heresy, that heresy involved a departure from the Church, and that demons were always involved in such a departure, are certainly less important features for John, if not absent from his heresiology. Despite that these causes for heresy practically disappeared from the *Anacephalaeosis* of Epiphanius' *Panarion*, it should come as little surprise that they are similarly absent for John, although there are further reasons for why

90 Subjugation to the demons is mentioned several times in the beliefs of the Massalians, that they themselves believe in the demons, that Satan and the Holy Ghost together live in man, and even that Satan possesses the minds of men, but that is different from John ascribing the root of their heresy to the demons, which he does not take the time to do. In any case, the Messalians are also an idiosyncratic case in John's heresiology, and complications in the manuscript tradition are not completely solved. On the Messalians in John's work, see Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 71–76.

John would have felt comfortable with their absence, and why these causes also make no appearance in the heresies added to the *Anacephalaeosis*.

At about the same time in the mid-370s that Epiphanius was composing his mammoth work of heresiology, in which were included portions of several works engendering an anti-philosophical bent and a rejection of classical culture and secular learning, another trend in Christian thought was simultaneously developing in which much of the classical tradition was embraced. Basil the Great's (c. 330–379) essay addressed to young people on the *Value of Greek Literature* is perhaps the most significant and influential work from the period to speak to the issue. But Augustine of Hippo and Gregory of Nazianzus expressed similar views, and these were likewise highly regarded.[91]

Like Epiphanius' work, Basil's essay was written in the 370s, and also appears to have been quoted by John of Damascus.[92] Quotations from it appear several times in the *Sacra Parallela*, a work for the authorship of which John of Damascus is still the leading candidate (as discussed earlier), since scholarly efforts to identify the author conclusively have so far failed. In any case, its appearance there reflects the circulation of one possible attitude toward pagan works in eighth-century Palestine.[93]

Another figure who might briefly be mentioned is Gregory of Nazianzus, as he was the most often quoted of John of Damascus' predecessors in his own works.[94] In a letter to Seleukos, Gregory advises, "Perfect yourself in studies, in the works of the historians, in the books of the poets, in the smooth-flowing eloquence of the orators. Be versed, also, in the subtle disquisitions of philosophers. Have a prudent familiarity with all these, wisely culling from them all

91 For Basil's work, see N. G. Wilson (ed.), *Saint Basil on the Value of Greek Literature* (Duckworth, 1975) and for Augustine, see R. P. H. Green (ed.), *De doctrina Christiana by Augustine of Hippo* (Clarendon Press, 1995), especially Book 2. For the Cappadocians' defense in general of secular learning and use in theology, see Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity*, p. 164. For a specific example of Gregory's positive attitude, see PG 36.508B, where he contrasts the view to that of other Christians opposed to education from classical sources.

92 See Basil and N. G. Wilson, *Saint Basil on the Value of Greek Literature* (Duckworth, 1975) for Wilson's suggestion to date the text to the 370s.

93 For the question of authorship, see still Holl, *Die Sacra Parallela des Johannes Damaskenos* and K. Holl, *Fragmente vornicèanischer Kirchenvèater aus den Sacra parallela* (J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), which still appear to present the most solid evidence that John was the author.

94 See Kotter's editions and the indices for comparison.

that is useful, carefully avoiding what is injurious in each."[95] Gregory's influence on John is apparent throughout the latter's works, and it appears that in this respect as well, John was clearly inclined.

In the modern literature John is often accused of being a simple compiler of texts from previous eras. This idea has been clearly refuted by Louth in his work, showing how creative John could be with regards to his theology.[96] Here, however, I would like to call further attention to John as a compiler, but as a selective one. The opening introduction of the *Fount of Knowledge* contains a very stark statement of John's methods:

> First of all I shall set forth the best contributions of the Greeks, because whatever there is of good has been given to men from above by God, since 'every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.' … In the imitation of the method of the bee, I shall make my composition from those things which are conformable with the truth and from our enemies themselves gather the fruit of salvation.[97]

This passage demonstrates that John's intention from the very beginning was not only to use, but even embrace certain elements of pagan Greek philosophy, despite the many snares he admits it contains.

Scholars are only beginning to appreciate the full extent of the use of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy in the service of Christian theology. Beginning in at least the sixth century categories of Christian discourse were increasingly formed and shaped toward Christian ends through the use of Aristotelian models. The beginning of this trend may be credited to John of Scythopolis and Maximus' commentary on Dionysius the Areopagite, who made use of Neoplatonic philosophy in their theology, and who by doing so certainly encouraged others to do so, as Dionysius, who himself made use of Neoplatonic philosophy, quickly became a touchstone of orthodoxy.[98]

---

95 Gregory Nazianzus, 'Letter to Seleucos,' in P. Gallay (ed.), *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Lettres* 2 vols. (Les Belles lettres, 1964). Translation from the French is mine.

96 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 15–28, and passim.

97 Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 5.

98 Dionysius was, of course, perceived to have been the disciple of Paul, and therefore assumed a completely orthodox source of information. The use of his works, which made use of Neoplatonic categories of thought, therefore validated using the philosophy, at least implicitly. For further discussion, and more on Dionysius' influence, see P. Rorem and J. C. Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus: Annotating the Areopagite* (Clarendon Press, 1998) and A. Louth, 'The Reception of Dionysius up to Maximus the Confessor', *Modern Theology* 24.4 (2008), pp. 573–83.

It has been argued, however, that John of Damascus stands as the last in a long line of theologians stretching back to the fourth century who made increasing use of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy, and as seen above, we do have such examples. Erismann has argued this point, but fails to distinguish adequately between the use of such philosophy by Theodore of Raithu and Anastasius as examples on the one hand, and the avowed acceptance of its worth by figures such as John Philloponus and John of Damascus on the other.[99] Anastasius, as we have seen above, strongly spoke out against the use of this philosophy, even if he was a silent consumer and scholar of it. In the Syriac Christian community of the seventh- and eighth-centuries, however, the monastery of Qenneshre appears to have been a centre for the learning of philosophy and exhibits the wholesale study of Aristotle and his works, having inherited claims that such study was crucial to the study of theology.[100] John of Damascus appears to more closely resemble his Syrian counterparts and their attitudes, and parts ways with Anastasius, for John's praise for and use of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy is rather more advanced than that of his co-religionist. As seen in his statement above, his is more than a simple borrowing from Greek philosophy, but is rather an explicit acceptance of some of its potential value, and the attitude expressed in the opening introduction is not the only place John displays such an affinity.

We find further evidence in the hierarchy in which John places philosophy in his *De Fide.* In chapter 3 John subdivides the different kinds of knowledge into different categories. What is interesting, however, is that philosophy, and

99 C. Erismann, 'A World of Hypostases: John of Damascus' Rethinking of Aristotle's Categorical Ontology', *StPatr* 50 (2011), pp. 251–69.

100 See especially the work of Baumstark for the work at Qenneshre, and his efforts to catalogue some of this extensive literature. A. Baumstark, *Syrisch-arabische Biographieen des Aristoteles. Syrisch Commentare zur Eisagoge des Porphyrios* (Teubner, 1900) and A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der Syrischen Literatur* (Marcus and Weber, 1922). Sergius of Raishaina, a Syriac Miaphysite writing in the sixth century claimed that "Without these [Aristotle's logical works] neither can the meaning of medical writings be ascertained, nor can the opinion of the philosophers be understood, nor, indeed, can the true sense be uncovered of the Divine Scriptures, wherein lies the hope of our salvation—unless it should be that someone receives divine ability thanks to the exalted nature of his way of life, with the result that he has no need for human instruction. For education and advancement in the direction of all the sciences, as far as human ability is concerned, cannot take place without the exercise of logic." (cited in S. P. Brock, 'The Syriac Background to the world of Theodore of Tarsus', in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 30–53, p. 43).

not theology, stands at the top of his pyramid of knowledge. Sections of the passage are worth quoting in full:

> Philosophy, again, is knowledge of both divine and human things, that is to say, of things both visible and invisible … Still again, philosophy is the making of oneself like God. Now we become like God in wisdom, which is to say, in the true knowledge of good; and in justice, which is a fairness in judgement without respect to persons; and in holiness, which is to say, in goodness, which is superior to justice, being that by which we do good to them that wrong us.… Philosophy, again, is a love of wisdom. But, true wisdom is God. Therefore, the love of God, this is the true philosophy. Philosophy is divided into speculative and practical. The speculative is divided into theology, physiology, and mathematics. The practical is divided into ethics, domestic economy, and politics. Now the speculative is the orderly disposition of knowledge. So, theology is the consideration of incorporeal and immaterial things—first of all, of God, who is absolutely immaterial; and then of angels and souls.…
>
> There are, however, some people who have endeavored to do away entirely with philosophy by asserting that it does not exist and that neither does any knowledge or perception exist. We shall answer them by asking: How is it that you say that there is neither philosophy, nor knowledge, nor perception? Is is by your knowing and perceiving it, or is it by your not knowing and perceiving it? If you have perceived it, well that is knowledge and perception.[101]

Philosophy for John, here, of course, is not simple Greek philosophy. Rather it has assumed all things under its wings, and retains the original meaning the word implies, a 'lover of wisdom.' Yet wisdom here includes the full knowledge of the earthly and the divine, and is not limited to what he calls the 'speculative' (θεωρητικὸν), under which heading theology, mathematics, and natural science are subsumed. As we see above, toward the end of the chapter he even calls attention to those who would do away with philosophy as foolish. It would seem, that John would be comfortable not only with 'divine knowledge', but also with the use of earthly knowledge, and, as we have seen, 'the best contributions of the Greeks.'

101 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. 1, p. 56–57; Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, pp. 11–12. Due to the process of revision that the *Dialectica* was undergoing, some of the material above also appears in chapter 66 of *recensio fusior*. See Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. 1, pp. 136–37.

John of Damascus is deeply aware of the differences between the pagan philosophical and Christian traditions. He calls attention to the types of philosophy in which the ancients were interested, and that in which the Christians are interested. Where he explains the different way of understanding genus, he says:

> … Now these aforementioned are of no concern to the philosophers. Again, that is called genus to which the species is subaltern. For example, under animal come man, the horse, and other species; hence the animal is a genus. It is with this kind of genus that the philosophers are concerned and we define it by saying that genus is that which is predicated in respect to their essence of several things differing in species.[102]

A similar kind of parsing between the kind of material in which philosophers are interested and that in which Christians are interested appears in his discussion of species in the next chapter.

John's more positive reception to philosophy than many of his predecessors allowed him to adopt and make use of many more philosophical concepts than they had. Epiphanius is known to have held a disdain for classical culture and he himself appears not to have been well educated, again in stark contrast to John.[103] This is fully evidenced by the abundant use of Neoplatonic philosophical definitions incorporated into the *Fount of Knowledge*. The definitions of lemma (λημμά), common opinion (kοινὴ), thesis (θέσις), and heresy (αΐρεσίς) are a few of many definitions developed as recently as a century and a half before John wrote, in the late sixth-century Neoplatonic philosophical school of Alexandria.[104] Some of these definitions (but not that of heresy), have older origins, but the place from which they were culled was there, as can be seen from a brief textual comparison between John's work and that of the philosopher 'David', to continue using the name posterity has given him. One might prefer to think that those of John's background would only have made use of

102 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. 1, p. 73, lns. 19–29; Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 30.

103 Kim, 'The Imagined Worlds of Epiphanius of Cyprus', at 187–90.

104 On this school and its apparent continuance even after the closing of the philosophical school by Justinian in Athens, and the more general phenomenon of the persistence of Neoplatonic philosophy in the sixth century more generally, see C. Wildberg, 'Philosophy in the Age of Justinian', in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 316–40. The definitions can all be found in A. Busse, *Eliae in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias Commentaria* (Reimer, 1900), p. 108.

select, Christian materials in order to express themselves, and point out that he may have received his definitions from orthodox collections of philosophical definitions.[105] While this in itself is probably true, this argument falls quickly to the point that at some stage, not long before John wrote, these sixth/seventh century definitions were recorded and used by a Christian, and incorporated into that person's 'orthodox' theology. It is further known that, in contrast to the philosophical school at Athens, a considerable proportion of students at the philosophical school in Alexandria were Christians, so that it is not surprising that a Christian from such a background would use these definitions, knowing that they were of a pagan philosophical origin.[106] The definitions themselves were conceived of and recorded by 'David' in a pagan environment.[107] The two thought worlds, pagan and Christian, clearly overlapped, and overlapped quite voluntarily in persons such as John.

There is further evidence, however, that John took particular exception to those who eschewed the use of worldly knowledge in the pursuit and advancement of Christian theology. One of the heresies John added to Epiphanius' long list of heresies in his book *On Heresies* is a heresy that outside knowledge should not be applied to the Scriptures. The *Gnosimachi* are said to oppose all Christian knowledge, and assert that those who search the sacred Scriptures for higher purposes are "doing something useless, because God requires of the Christian nothing more than good deeds." Consequently, they argue, "it is better to take a more simple approach and not to be curious after any doctrine arrived

105 The articles by Roueché provide the evidence for such an argument, as he shows that logical compendia did circulate under Christian names such as Maximus, even if the content of these were actually pagan in origin. See Roueché, 'Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century' and Roueché, 'A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology' in particular.

106 K. Praechter, 'Richtungen und Schulen im Neuplatonismus' in *Genethliakon für Carl Robert* (Weidmann, 1910), pp. 105–55, reprinted in K. Praechter and H. Dörrie, *Kleine Schriften* (Olms, 1973), pp. 165–216.

107 Although it has been argued that the source of these notes was a Christian teaching in a Neoplatonic school, the argument made by Wildberg that they could not have been Christians is to me convincing. See C. Wildberg, 'Three Neoplatonic Introductions to Philosophy: Ammonius, David, Elias', *Hermathena* 149 (1990), pp. 33–51. Also see further below my discussion of 'David', and from where and when the body of works currently assigned under that name actually received it. For the older view, see the collection of articles in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (Duckworth, 1990), where both Sorabji and Westerink in their articles assume the Christianity of David and Elias, while Westerink shows the unlikelihood of this being the case for Olympiodorus, their predecessor and teacher.

at by learned research."[108] This group's inclusion in John's heresiology thus gives some reason to think that John took particular exception to those who opposed the use of intellectual knowledge of a pagan sort in their theology.[109]

It seems highly unlikely that an entanglement with Greek philosophy would consititute heresy for John. To the contrary, it appears that he considered the assimilation of many logical principles of Greek philosophy necessary for the discernment and rejection of heresy.[110] The positive light in which John sees Greek philosophy deserves a separate study of its own. In the meantime it is further relevant to the case here to point out that this is one area in which we might separate John from his precursor Epiphanius, and thus sever the pair's understanding of heresy, and free us to approach the issue of what constituted heresy for John more broadly. This had already been done to some extent by the editor of the *Panarion*, as we have seen. Now John's use of its style could be put to further ends.

The Definition of Heresy in John's Works

John was certainly aware of the definition of heresy as a willful departure from Christ, and even uses the term in this way in his works. In *De Recta Sententia*, or 'On Right Thinking', John offers a brief exposition on the teaching of the faith, and the six Ecumenical Councils. Toward the end of the work, after summarizing, he gives a brief confession of his faith:

> καὶ πάντα τὰ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ὁρισθέντα, στέργω καὶ ἀσμενίζομαι, δεχόμενος πάντας οὓς ἐδέξαντο, καὶ ἀποβαλλόμενος καὶ ἀναθεματίζων πάντας οὓς ἀπεβάλοντο, καὶ πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν, ἀπὸ Σίμωνος τοῦ Μάγου μέχρι τῶν νῦν κινηθεισῶν κατὰ τῆς ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν Ἐκκλησίας.
>
> and everything that was determined/defined by them (i.e. the above mentioned six synods) I accept and gladly welcome, accepting all those

108 Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 149.

109 Louth has argued that John's main purpose in composing the *Dialectica* was to facilitate the learned study of Scripture specifically. See Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 44–45.

110 Erismann takes a similar view, although unfortunately without supporting evidence, some of which I hope has been offered here. It is, however, a fair conjecture that, "Not only did John of Damascus accept that logic of pagan origin may be used by a Christian, he also considered dogmatic orthodoxy to be essentially determined by a clear understanding of logic and an adequate definition of terms." See Erismann, 'A World of Hypostases'.

> whom they accepted and rejecting and anathematizing all those rejected and every heresy, from Simon Magus up to those who recently moved against the holy Church of Christ and God.[111]

Unfortunately, there is no further context to tell us if "those who have recently moved against the holy Church" would include the Ishmaelites or not. Nevertheless, what is interesting here is that John appears to accept the basic idea that heresy began with Simon, in line with a long tradition of heresiologists who similarly began their works with him. This would then appear to keep with the tradition that heresy was seen as a willful departure from Christ.

In the *Dialectica*, however, John expresses another understanding of heresy, and one that he has inherited from a non-Christian tradition. As discussed above, John's own use and interest in philosophy would suggest that he was willing to make use of a wide variety of sources. Although the chain of transmission between his sources and he is difficult to untangle, it seems likely from what little we know of the man that he was comfortable using pagan sources of knowledge for his own development and thought.[112]

Running alongside the developing ecclesiastical tradition of identifying and refuting heresies which provide us with a picture of how heresy was understood in the Roman Christian world, another heresiological tradition continued to be expressed, namely within the Neoplatonist philosophical tradition, which perpetuated its own understanding of heresy and heresiography. This tradition clearly continued as a categorizing discourse through at least the sixth century, and examples of such later heresiography survive in the Introductions to Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories* written by so-called 'Elias', as well as Ammonius, Olympiodorus, Simplicius, and John Philopponus.[113] These heresiographies, serving as introductions to larger philosophical works, although not polemical, nonetheless participated in the practice of listing, identifying, and summarizing the beliefs of a group of adherents to a particular school of thought or philosophy. So it is that if we read one of these works, we find categorizations of Stoics, Cynics, Platonists, and Aristotelians, along with their accompanying descriptions. It is from this tradition, albeit probably indirectly, that John received his definition of heresy. One problem with the understanding

111 PG 94.1432B (Translation is mine).

112 Although, as we shall discuss further, it is likely John received the definition he uses for heresy from a Christian source.

113 These works have appeared in the series *Commentarium in Aristotelem Graeca* (CAG) (Berlin), volumes 18.1 (Elias), 4.4 (Ammonius), 12.1 (Olympiodorus), Simplicius (8), and 13.1 (Philoponus).

of Christian heresiology scholars have worked with so far has stemmed from an ignorance of this tradition, and perhaps a reluctance to accept its influence on Christian authors working in Late Antiquity. More recently attempts have been made to situate Christian heresiologists as people working within, or at least dialoguing with, their inherited cultural traditions.[114] Rather than seeing the heresiologist as a Christian whose starting point initiated only with Christ, and who followed only in the footsteps of prior Christian heresiologists, modern historians are starting to appreciate how they were influenced not only by their own Christian tradition, but also by the Hellenic philosophical traditions around them. This is reflected most recently, for example, in an article on Epiphanius' heresiology, in which it is pointed out that he used a common topos of the holy man in late antiquity, and inverted that picture of the holy man to create an image of the unholy heresiarch in his *Panarion*.[115]

As alluded to above, it has been observed that one collection of definitions of terms found in John's *Dialectica* comes ultimately from a group of texts which are sixth- or early seventh-century Neoplatonist commentaries on works of Aristotle (primarily the *Categories*) or Porphyry's *Isagoge*, or commentaries on that work written by the same person(s) produced in Alexandria at the Philosophical school whose chair was Olympiodorus (c. 500–c. 570). Various names have been suggested as John's main source without a close textual comparison being made between John's work and these philosophers, of whom we know only little.[116] The fact that there is considerable overlap in the material covered among this group of philosophers is likely to confound secure answers for the foreseeable future. The definition of αἵρεσις itself, however, comes from one text, whose author has been disputed, and has been called either 'David', sometimes known in the manuscript tradition as 'David the Philosopher' or 'David the Invincible', or by the philosopher 'Elias'.[117] Prior to considering how John received this definition, let us see the definition as it appears in that text:

114 See the introduction to Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context* and J. R. Lyman, '2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy', *JECS* 11.2 (2003), pp. 209–22 for examples.

115 Kim, 'Reading the Panarion as Collective Biography'.

116 Chase in his introduction suggested Ammonius, although he has not been followed by others, and he neither produces evidence for the claim, nor have I found any convincing. Normally David and Elias are ascribed together as the main sources, as by Louth. See Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. xxvii and Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 42–44.

117 For a recent collection of articles on 'David' and his tradition, see V. Calzolari and J. Barnes (eds.), *L'œuvre de David l'Invincible et la transmission de la pensée grecque dans la tradition armènienne et syriaque* (Brill, 2009).

> Ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἀκριβῶς δυνάμεθα παρακολουθεῖν τοῖς λεγομένοις, εἰ μὴ πρῶτον γνῶμεν τί ἐστιν αἵρεσις, φέρε πρότερον περὶ αὐτῆς εἴπωμεν. Αἵρεσίς ἐστι ἀνδρῶν ἀστείων δόξα πρὸς μὲν ἑαυτοὺς συμφωνούντων πρὸς δὲ ἄλλους διαφωνούντων.[118]

This definition is nearly identical to the one John himself uses in the *Dialectica*, with the minor adjustment of the term 'ἀστείων' (educated) having been removed. John defines heresy as "a persuasion, or opinion (δόξα), held by several persons in agreement with each other but at variance with others."[119] This provides an interesting contrast to the usual understanding of heresy we have seen, which implies a turning away from an orthodox Christianity with which one is already familiar, and may even have previously accepted. John's definition does not mean that those expressing any heterodox view are necessarily people who have turned their backs on Christianity. John may have considered Islam a heresy, or rather 'αἵρεσις', as the Greek has it, but there is no evidence he saw Islam as a specifically 'Christian heresy'.

There has been some considerable dispute regarding the author of this definition in recent scholarship. Relevant to this book are recent claims that despite an earlier attribution to 'Elias' made by Busse, the editor of the text, it should actually be (re)attributed to 'David'.[120] Somewhat ironically, scholars on both sides of this argument appear to have been arguing without some crucial

118 Busse, *Eliae in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias Commentaria*, p. 108, lns. 19–22.

119 δόξα πλειόνων ἀνθρώπων πρὸς ἀλλήλους μὲν συμφωνούντων, πρὸς ἄλλους δὲ διαφωνούντων. Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. 1, p. 134, ln. 60, and Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 100.

120 The text was first edited and commented on in 1900 by Busse (see above note). No definitive identification of the author has been made thus far. The debate continues to surge, although not always consistently. The group of articles collected in Calzolari and Barnes (eds.), *L'œuvre de David* varyingly assume David's authorship or Elias', appealing to one or another scholar for their claims, using newly culled evidence from the texts, while appearing to ignore other articles adducing different evidence in the same volume. The article by Calzolari offers the best summary of the debate leading up to the volume (pp. 29–32), but the reader is left wondering why she, one of the editors, mentions none of the evidence offered in other parts of the volume. She takes no further stand on the issue, other than to reiterate the point made previously that further work on the Armenian corpus is needed before clear answers of attribution can be made. Meanwhile, serious doubts regarding the personal faith of 'Elias' and 'David', such as those expressed by Wildberg (see below), are nearly completely ignored (Sweeting's article (p. 138), is the only one to mention Wildberg's work, and express doubt of 'David's' Christianity). While it is understandable that articles collected from a colloquium would not express the same opinion, one might have liked to see the editors at least call attention to the fact, and take note of

information, recently revealed by Symeon Paschalides in his work on David the Paphlogonian, a tenth-century author who, it seems, is the source of confusion in the manuscript tradition regarding the identity of the person often referred to as 'David the Invincible', also sometimes identified with (or as) 'David the Philosopher'. We do not have any attribution to the 'David' in question prior to the tenth century, so all evidence that the work should be attributed to a sixth-century David is quite late. Dr. Paschalides has shown convincingly that the attribution of the name 'David the Invincible' to our sixth-century text has certainly come from confusion with Niketas David the Paphlagonian (i.e. 'David the Invincible'), an editor of the text working in Constantinople.[121] Similar observations regarding the late attachment of the name 'Elias' to these texts have also been made, and there is in fact very little remaining reason for us to think that the authors of these texts were Christians.[122] It has also been shown that many of the ideas presented in these texts have little overlap with Christian beliefs, and claims that these authors were only disguising their paganism have been clearly met.[123] Together with the evidenced adduced by

---

the contradictory statements appearing in the articles regarding both the identity and faith of 'David'.

121 Σ. Πασχαλίδης, *Νικήτας Δαβίδ Παφλαγών: τὸ προσώπο καί τό εργο του* (Κέντρο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 1999), pp. 282–88. The consequence of Dr. Paschalides' work is that the most logical explanation for how the confusion took place is that the texts did not travel from Alexandria to Armenia and translated there, but rather came first to Constantinople, were edited by Niketas David the Paphlogonian, and later travelled to Armenia. This of course explains why our earliest Armenian manuscript of these works is no earlier than the 13th century. It is most unfortunate that his close reading of the texts on this issue has gone unnoticed in the modern scholarship. I understand from him that he may publish an article on the issue in English or French, which would be most welcome, given the impact it will have on the whole discussion concerning the identities of 'David' and 'Elias'.

122 Neither Photius nor the Suda know of a philosopher 'Elias', and it appears that the earliest manuscripts circulated anonymously for some time before the name 'Elias' was added to them. See L. G. Westerink, 'Elias on the Prior Analytics', *Mnemosyne* 14 (1961), pp. 126–39, reprinted in 1980 in id. *Texts and Studies in Neoplatonism and Byzantine Literature*. Amsterdam, 59–72. For the absence of Elias' name, see N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (Duckworth and JHU Press, 1983).

123 Wildberg, 'Three Neoplatonic Introductions to Philosophy: Ammonius, David, Elias' and Wildberg, 'Philosophy in the Age of Justinian'. See also Wildberg's contributions to the now online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy for 'Elias' and 'David' at http://plato.stanford.edu.

Paschalides regarding the names attached to these texts any suggestion that the authors of these texts were Christians should be removed.[124]

This matter being laid to rest, it is perhaps immaterial to note what has not been noted previously, namely that the works that seem to feature in John all stem from the same person, i.e. 'Elias-David'. What needs to be said, however, is that if the group of works which have been assigned to 'David' in the manuscript tradition do originate from one person, then it is this one person's works that were taken by Christian Byzantine logicians, who cut and compiled their own shorter works of logic, from which John in all probability took his definitions. If additional evidence is produced linking these texts to a common author, whether the name of that author is ever known or not, it will be this author, and only this author, whose works were transmitted to John.[125]

As Louth has pointed out, it is just as likely that John relied on an abbreviated version or manual of Christian logic created from these texts, rather than from the texts themselves.[126] Rouéche has done a great deal of work uncovering the existence of seventh-century Byzantine Christian manuals of logic, and he has shown that they also circulated under the name of Maximus the Confessor.[127] Alternatively, we can say that they may also have been associated with Olympiodorus the Deacon, a sixth-century Alexandrian about whom we know very little. Anastasius of Sinai appears to have confused Olympiodorus the Philosopher and one-time holder of the chair of philosophy at Alexandria, with Olympiodorus the Deacon.[128] However, if Anastasius could make the

124 This observation, of course, has no bearing on whether the other 'David the Invincible', an Armenian theologian of the fifth/sixth century, and canonized by the Armenian Church, was a Christian. The problem has been the identification of the two David's, and not how it came to pass that the obviously Christian 'David' of Armenia came to author texts in Alexandria that appear to contain a great number of pagan philosophical positions.

125 One plausible, although unproveable theory that was briefly advanced is that the definitions passed to Stephen the Philosopher, who took them to Constantinople, in which context they may have passed to Maximus and his disciples, and from there on to others, such as John of Damascus. This theory, however, upsets the chronology of Roueché, who has recently argued for re-dating the works of 'Elias' and 'David' to after or at least contemporary with Stephen. For the briefly suggested theory, see T. T. Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 13–16. For Roueché's suggested chronology, see Roueché, 'The Definitions of Philosophy and a New Fragment of Stephanus the Philosopher'.

126 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 42–43.

127 Roueché, 'A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology' and idem., 'The Definitions of Philosophy and a New Fragment of Stephanus the Philosopher'.

128 Westerink states that Anastasius' confusion has led some scholars into thinking Olympiodrus was a Christian, which he takes for granted he cannot possibly have

mistake of identifying the two, it is certainly possible that John, who relied on Anastasius for his own work, or another Christian working in the Melkite Palestinian-Sinai milieu, did likewise, and so transmitted the anonymous lecture notes of his students as works of Christians, making them more palatable to John, focused as he was on the preservation of Christian traditions.

As mentioned above, John's work was meant to be read in order, and from cover to cover. John's definition of 'hairesis', therefore, is expected to have been digested in preparation for the absorption of the heresies that were typically not considered to be so by Christians. This is in contrast to the *Doctrina Patrum's* organization, which offers some more polemical definitions of heresy, more in keeping with the term's usual connotation. For example, in that text, we find, in addition to the definition above:

> Αἵρεσίς ἐστι περὶ πίστεως οὐκ ἀληθὴς δόξα.
> Αἱρετικός ἐστιν ὁ τὸ ψεῦδος τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν πίστει προτιμῶν.[129]

These unattributed definitions found their way into the text of the *Doctrina*, as part of the compiler's project in that work was to accumulate definitions from a wide variety of sources.[130] Thus, while John certainly looked on the heresies as opposed to God, his concentration was in a different area, and he sought instead to characterize the various beliefs of the heresies, in conjunction with the practice of the summarizer of the *Panarion.*

John's definition was for him a necessary part of understanding the heresies in his book on them, and it requires careful attention. The book on heresies actually begins with the statement that all heresies derive from four 'parent'

---

been. L. G. Westerink, 'The Alexandrian Commentators and the Introductions to their Commentaries', in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (Duckworth, 1990), pp. 325–48, at 331. Chadwick suggests the possibility that the two may be identified if Olympiodorus converted to Christianity later in life, a possibility raised by the monotheist tendency of his teacher Ammonius. H. Chadwick, 'The Mind of Olympiodorus, Deacon of Alexandria', in H. Chadwick (ed.), *Studies on Ancient Christianity* (Ashgate Variorum, 2005), pp. 1–6 (XIV). For the identification made by Anastasius, see PG 89.936C 9–11 and 1189A 12–13.

129 Diekamp (ed.), *Doctrina Patrum*, p. 251. "Heresy is about belief, not true faith. A heretic is one who prefers falsehood to the truth in the faith."

130 The definitions are unattributed in the text of the *Doctrina Patrum*, whose author attempted to label each of his definitions with the author from whom he took his definition. The first of these, however, can also be found in Cod. Oxon. Bodl. Auct. T. 1, which is attributed to John of Damascus, and may be part of an early edition of the *Dialectica.* See Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. 1, p. 172, ln. 70 and Louth, *St. John Damascene*, p. 32.

heresies, which are listed as Barbarism, Scythism, Hellenism, and Judaism.[131] But there is little good evidence that John saw Islam as a heresy derived from one of these four heresies. These four 'parent' heresies, as well as the first 80 heresies in the book, as we have said, are taken from the *Panarion* of Epiphanius.[132] It is thought the Damascene appended 20 heresies, bringing the completed number of heresies up to one hundred.[133] John's utilization of the *Panarion* makes it more difficult to determine what he actually considered Islam to be vis-à-vis the type of αἵρεσις out of which Islam arose. That is, because he did not author the section on parent heresies, we cannot be sure that he saw his additions to the book were derivative of those parent heresies in the same way one can assume Epiphanius considered his 80 to be.

It is thus important to consider his precise words carefully, and the first line of the text on Islam has itself been ambiguous in the judgment of scholars:

> Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν κρατοῦσα λαοπλανὴς [θρη]σκεία τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν …[134]
>
> There is up to now the still prevailing people-deceiving practice [θρησκεία] of the Ishmaelites …[135]

In Kotter's critical edition of *On Heresies* he corrected the inaccuracies of earlier editors on the basis of a careful reading of the manuscripts, replacing σκεια, found in older editions, such as J. P. Migne's, with 'θρησκεία' in the first sentence of the heresy on Islam. Voorhis, translating the Latin text, but referencing the Greek in his translation, saw 'σκεια', in Migne's edition, and assumed a reading of 'σκια'. He translated it as "spiritual darkness", or "error".[136] The Latin text in Migne offers *superstitio*, which most scholars translating have taken as

131 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 19; Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 111.

132 For Epiphanius' work see Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, and volumes 2 and 3, and Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I* and *II*.

133 This tradition of organizing things into precisely the number suggested was not strictly adhered to, indicating that perhaps the belief was not deeply held. Due to this lack of consistency in Patristic listings, it was not known until Kotter's work whether there were exactly one hundred heresies listed in John's work, or approximately a hundred. Kotter's proof that there were a hundred relies on a previously unknown manuscript he discovered dating from the ninth or early tenth century which places the work on Islam (or the Ishmaelites, as the adherents are categorized) in the hundredth position. See Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 54–60 for discussion.

134 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 60, ln. 1.

135 The translation is mine. The translation of the word 'θρησκεία' is discussed further below.

136 J. W. Voorhis, 'John of Damascus on the Moslem Heresy', *MW* 24 (1934), pp. 391–98, at 392.

'superstition'.[137] Sahas, the first scholar to work from Migne's Greek text, also translated the word as superstition, but left the matter open for further consideration pending the production of a more advanced critical edition.[138] Kotter's edition was partly based on the discovery of a shortened form of *On Heresies 100* in the *Doctrina Patrum*.[139] As mentioned in the Introduction above, the *Doctrina* was first put together around the turn of the eighth century, and so earlier than John of Damascus' *On Heresies*. But, Kotter noted that the oldest manuscript containing a portion of *On Heresies 100*, and on which Diekamp drew, is from the late eighth or early ninth century.[140] For this reason the shortened form appears to be an interpolation in a later version of the *Doctrina*, dating from the late eighth or early ninth century, while the earliest version of the *Doctrina Patrum* is of an earlier provenance.[141] This confusion has perhaps caused some to overlook the importance of these lines from our text in the edition, and Kotter's observations were thus invaluable in putting together an accurate edition of the text.

John therefore introduces his whole discussion of Islam by referring to the "θρησκεία of the Ishmaelites", and he does not use the word αἵρεσις in his opening lines. Further, we may understand θρησκεία to be a characterization of the Ishmaelites in a way which we could not under a reading of σκια, this term being understood simply as an additional polemical device insulting the Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites had an extensive and documented history with the Romans not easily forgotten, and this was the first time they would appear in an heresiology, and so some explanation would be required.[142] John starts

137 Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 153. Chase also worked from Migne's Latin edition, which is in part what prompted Sahas to translate the text again from Migne's Greek edition.

138 Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 68.

139 See Diekamp (ed.), *Doctrina Patrum*, pp. 266–70 for the text, and Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, pp. 211–14, for the evidence that the section on Heresies dates from at least the late eighth century. For a brief discussion of the issue, see Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 32–33 and 54–55. In fact the manuscript on which Diekamp drew only contains the first few lines of *On Heresies 100*, causing some question of authenticity and dating of John's text to remain ultimately unresolved.

140 Diekamp (ed.), *Doctrina Patrum*, p. LXXII. For the text, see pp. 266–69.

141 Kotter lays out the evidence for this in Kotter, *Die Überlieferung der Pege Gnoseos*, pp. 211–14.

142 Arabs are first identified as Ishmaelites in the Book of Jubilees Ch. 20:11–13. The other two terms John uses at the beginning of his treatise, Saracens and Hagarenes, were used as early as Eusebius (c. 260–340) and Ammianus (c. 325–400), and then by Socrates (380–450) and Sozomen (d. c. 425) in their Ecclesiastical Histories, setting a major precedent

his treatise with a short description of the Ishmaelites and their practices down to the time of Heraclius, and characterizes the people as idolaters until that time. He then recounts how a false prophet named Muhammad appeared to them who, "encountering the Old and the New Testaments, and likewise having conversed with a monk, apparently Arian, introduced a heresy of his own."[143] One question that has not been asked by earlier scholars regarding this text is whether John could have seen the Ishmaelites as a group or sect into which a false prophet (that is Muhammad) inserted himself and his 'heresy'. John's continued use of the designation 'Ishmaelites' in *On Heresies* suggests that he saw them as a group prior to the appearance of Muhammad, and one whose beliefs were affected by the arrival of a false prophet.

In *On Heresies 9*, we find evidence of the differences that Epiphanius and John saw between αἵρεσις and θρησκεία. I shall quote the part which concerns us here, and its value shall be made apparent shortly.

> Οὗτός ἐστιν ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων, πρὸ μὲν τοῦ καταστῆναι αἱρέσεις εἰς Ἕλληνας καὶ πρὸ τοῦ συστῆναι αὐτῶν τὰ δόγματα, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ εἶναι Ἑλλήνων τὴν θρησκείαν καὶ μέσον τοῦ Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ πρόφασιν εἰληφὼς ἀπὸ τῶν χρόνων Ναβουχοδονόσορ καὶ τῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων αἰχμαλωσίας·.[144]

> This [Samaritanism] originated with the Jews before the appearance of heresies among the Greeks and before their teachings took definite form but after they had received their religion. It stands between Judaism and Hellenism and took occasion to arise in the time of Nebuchodonosor and the Jewish captivity.[145]

John, repeating the *Anacephalaeosis*, writes that Samaritanism, which he says derives from Judaism, came into existence prior to the establishment of

for the Roman world's usage to describe the Arabs without discrimination from other groups such as the Scenitae, or foederati. See I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), pp. 126 and 279–81.

143 "ὃς τῇ τε παλαιᾷ καὶ νέᾳ διαθήκῃ περιτυχών, ὁμοίως ἀρειανῷ προσομιλήσας δῆθεν μοναχῷ ἰδίαν συνεστήσατο αἵρεσιν", Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 60, ln. 12–13."

144 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, pp. 22–23, ln. 1–5.

145 Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 114. The parallel text in Williams' translation of Epiphanius, reads "The occasion for it [Samaritanism] came at the time of Nebuchadnezzar and the captivity of the Jews, before the establishment of sects among the Greeks and the rise of their doctrines, but after there was a Greek religion and during the period of Judaism." Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 10. Again, Holl's edition of the Anacephalaeosis is virtually identical. Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, p. 166.

αἱρέσεις (pl.) among the Greeks, but after there was Greek religion (μετὰ δὲ τοῦ εἶναι Ἑλλήνων τὴν θρησκείαν).[146] So John and Epiphanius used θρησκεία broadly, and applied it to groups of people prior to the group having established more specific teachings and doctrines. The text also links the establishment of αἵρεσις to a rise in doctrines or teachings (καὶ πρὸ τοῦ συστῆναι αὐτῶν τὰ δόγματα) themselves, an understanding consistent with John's definition of αἵρεσις in the *Dialectica*, where the qualifying group coinheres by virtue of the participating members' ascent to a same belief (δόξα).

John's definition of αἵρεσις also suggests he has something in mind in opposition to a *common notion* or *opinion* (κοινὴ), the definition immediately following his definition of αἵρεσις. A *common notion* he defines as "a thing acknowledged by everyone, such as that the sun exists."[147] Thus, while an αἵρεσις is something agreed on by only a group of people in agreement with each other but in disagreement with others, a common opinion is something to which all agree. The language here for these definitions is anything but Christological or even ecclesiastical. These definitions retain the sense found in Elias/David, and as such are unrelated to questions of either *how* a heresy was formed, or from where it comes.

So, while Muahmmad may have introduced an αἵρεσις among the Ishmaelites, that does not necessarily imply all that the meaning 'heresy' has taken on from earlier ecclesiastical historians and theologians as seen above in chapter 1. Throughought the text John oscillates between describing what Muhammad laid out in his injunctions, and what the Ishmaelites practice. Thus while Muhammad may have engendered certain beliefs amongst the people, according to John he was not the sole locus of authority for such events in the minds of the Ishmaelites.[148] In the Damascene's mind, the Ishmaelites

146 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, pp. 22–23, ln. 1–5.

147 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. I, p. 134, ln. 61. (Translation is mine).

148 To take one example of how this might be seen, the Basilideans are a sect that predates Islam by several centuries, and held the tradition that Christ was not crucified, but rather Simon of Cyrene who took the likeness of Christ was crucified in his place. The Basilideans are known to have flourished in the second century, but lasted at least until the fourth, as Epiphanius mentions them in his heresiology with information that they were centered around the Nile Delta. As far as we know, the sect was confined to Egypt, but Theophanes and George Hamartolos both report traditions which place some of Muhammad's mercantile journeys in Egypt and Sinai. Similarly, later Armenian sources would attribute Muhammad's teaching that Christ was not crucified to his contact with Cerinthians, another sect that had teachings similar to those of the Basilideans. See R.W. Thomson, 'Armenian Variations on the Bahira Legend', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3–4 (1979–80), pp. 884–95.

clearly existed prior to the arrival of Muhammad and his heresy, and may have their own reasons for certain beliefs about the person Jesus.

The definition of heresy in John's *Dialectica* and how he used it in his work on Islam show that John did not think of Islam as a 'heresy' in the sense the word has taken in the scholarly literature outlined in chapter one and used by most heresiologists, and modern scholarship should take a more nuanced view of John and his perspective. John was well aware of the long Christian tradition which asserted heresy as a phenomenon originating in the Church, yet he intentionally included in his manual of logic a definition with a broader scope than had heretofore been used by Christians, and as the basis of his work he used an heresiology that supported and fit this alternate understanding. To summarize: John's inclusion of Epiphanius' compilation of heresies in the *Anacephalaeosis*, his use of the word θρησκεία, his understanding of the Ishmaelites as a group independent from Muhammad, and his specific definition of αἵρεσις all demonstrate that John's particular interest in the Ishmaelites was in their *opinions* and how those opinions and ideologies differed from the Church's; he spends little time on *how* they arrived at their state, with the exception of explaining that Muhammad helped to lead them to it.

Demons and the Heresiology of John

Demons continued to play a significant role in heresiologies following the first four centuries after Christ, and were regularly mentioned by heresiologists in the seventh and eighth centuries as being responsible for various heresies. Thus, Sophronius in the seventh century; his Synodical Letter, prior to listing the heresies he condemns, says of the Origenists, "they seethe like demons and bring forth myriads of things from the diabolical and impious store of their heart …"[149] Anastasius of Sinai and Germanos of Constantinople also both refer to the demons as sources of heresy in their heresiologies, and it is well known that the theme that demons were ultimately responsible for a great deal of heresy had a long life in the beliefs of historians and theologians in the Roman Empire.[150]

However, in both the *Anacephalaeosis* of the *Panarion* and the heresiology of John, demons make not a single appearance in their supposed role as heresy instigators. While they do appear in the beliefs of various heretics, they are not once identified as being *responsible* for heresy. John does devote some space

149 Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-century Heresy*, pp. 122–23.

150 See Greenfield, *Late Byzantine Demonology*, pp. 68–70.

to a discussion of angels and demons in the third part of his magnum opus, *On the Orthodox Faith*, and the demons make a strong appearance as heresy instigators in the proof texts John uses in his treatises against the Iconoclasts. There, John specifically quotes a lengthy passage from John Climacus' *Spiritual Meadow* in which a demon is said to appear to a monk in his cell and offer the monk a respite from his attacks on him if he would only cease to venerate icons. In another passage, John states that the demons are envious of Christians for looking on icons, and being sanctified by them.[151] It is thus not because John has ceased to believe in or is unaware of the effects demons had on man that they fail to appear prominently in his book on heresies. Their absence from the heresiology is therefore notable, and revealing of John's purposes.

The presentation of the heresies in the *Anacephalaeosis* and the additional twenty heresies added to it is focused, as has already been mentioned, on the beliefs and practices of the heretics themselves, offering a summary of this material as briefly as possible. It may therefore be argued that the reason demons are absent from the *Anacephalaeosis* and John's heresiology was that Epiphanius (or whoever compiled the *Anacephalaeosis*) and John took for granted that demons were responsible for heresy of all kinds, whether pagan religion or philosophy, Jewish deviation or Christian deviation, and that there was no need to call further attention to them in their role as the inventors of these heresies. This argument is reasonable, but fails to satisfy an explanation for their total absence given the polemical nature of heresiology in general, and of some of the specific heresies contained in the heresiology in particular.

Another explanation which deserves closer consideration is that the conception of heresy offered in the definition discussed above and the heresiology that followed it, and John's conception of the demons, assisted in the preclusion of the one from the sphere of the other, at least as far as the heresiology itself is concerned. Christians conceived of the demons as angels, who, having been created good, fell from heaven in rebellion against God. As already argued by Le Boulluec, this made their association with Christians who had fallen away from the faith natural, and Justin Martyr, for example, can be shown to have actively substituted evil *daimones* for fallen angels in his use of Scripture. But this natural connection with Christian heretics would have made associating them with pre-Christian belief systems more complicated. Justin had not permitted himself to refer to the philosophical schools as demon-inspired, and this was in part because he associated the demons with apostasy and heresy

151 See Treatise I.64 for the passage from *The Spiritual Meadow*, which also appears in II.67, and II.6, which also appears in III.3 for John's explicit condemnation of the demons as the enemies of Iconodules. See Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises*, pp. 55–57, 62, and 83.

as defined by defection from the Church, or distortion of its teachings from within its folds.[152] I have highlighted above how Epiphanius' own understanding of the demons and heresy altered from pre-Christian to post-Christian deviations, and how he viewed the devil's activity as limited before Christ's coming. John of Damascus effectively preserved this teaching on the demons and how they influence man, as we can see from his exposition on them in *On the Orthodox Faith*:

> By his free choice he turned from what was according to nature to what was against it. Having become stirred up against the God who created him and having willed to rebel against Him, he was the first to abandon good and become evil … And so, all evil and the impure passions have been conceived by them and they have been permitted to visit attacks upon man. But they are unable to force anyone, for it is in our power either to accept the visitation or not. Wherefore, the unquenchable fire and everlasting torment have been prepared for the Devil and his evil spirits and for them who follow him. One should note that the fall is to the angels just what death is to men. For, just as there is no repentance for men after their death, so is there none for the angels after their fall.[153]

Close association between free-will and the work of the demons may help explain the minor role the demons play in John's heresiology. Although it is certainly possible that John takes for granted, as earlier heresiologists did, that heresies are the result of demons, he may intend the use of the term to be limited in a way similar to that of Epiphanius, or perhaps even more so. Whether the Ishmaelites could be seen as a pre-Christian or post-Christian group is yet another question that would impinge on our discussion here, but the only evidence in John's works themselves to prove he looked at them as an effectively pre-Christian belief system was discussed above, where John offers a brief history of their activities down to the times of Heraclius. He does not say whether the group is qualifiedly a 'post-Christian' phenomenon, and in the absence of specific evidence, we should doubt that John's heresiology lends itself to the kind of division between 'pre-Christian' heresies and 'post-Christian' ones as did the *Panarion*.

Indeed, it is more natural in this case to see the collapse of the pre- and post-Christian heresies in the *Anacephalaeosis* and John's work as a summing up

152 Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, p. 64.

153 Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. II, pp. 49–50; Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, pp. 210–11.

of all heresies, and one which would admit of the application of the demons to it in a consistent way. In this case, the metaphor stretching between the demons' apostasy and a believer's departure from the faith breaks down. In the text above, John immediately shifts back to a quotation he has taken from Nemesius of Emesa, in which the fall of the angels is compared to the death of man, in that repentance is no longer possible. Such a comparison does not preclude a further comparison being made to the fall of man into heresy, but the choice of emphasis by John should not be taken for granted, especially as he would not have thought that the fall into heresy was something from which it would have been impossible to repent.[154]

Thus, despite the fact that one of the major features of Christian heresiology is the inclusion of demons, we find this nowhere in John's own work. Epiphanius mentions the 'devilish' work in his Proemium II of the Greek authors, poets and chroniclers, but even this is absent from John's work and his introduction. Demons are similarly present in the work of Apostolic Constitutions as well in the making of heresy.[155] Did John take it for granted that demons were responsible for heresy? If he thought so, he did not say so. If the heresies were the result of demonic activity, then they required a cure, something offered in Epiphanius' work, and mentioned by the earlier heresiologists, but again absent from John, who instead is concerned with "recognizing the lie, so that we may more closely follow the truth".[156] For John the heresies are lies, but they are not depicted as demonic poisons in people needing a cure. They are ideologies and beliefs, not sicknesses within the churches. For Irenaeus, as for so many other heresiologists, the heretics were present in the Church, using the same Scriptures with the potential to infect the faithful. The Ishmaelites, by contrast, are depicted as having lived alongside the Christian Oikoumene for centuries, and who now perhaps may have adopted their own heresy and Scriptures.

154 The passage which starts in the quotation above with, "One should note" is taken from Nemesius *On the Nature of Man*, book I, PG 40.524.

155 See Apostolic Constitutions Book 6.2, 6–8.

156 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. I, p. 52, lns. 51–53; Chase (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, p. 5.

CHAPTER 3

The Life of John of Damascus, His Use of the Qur'an, and the Quality of His Knowledge of Islam

Debate on whether John of Damascus knew Arabic and the Qur'an has continued for the last fifty years at least, and I shall not here defend one or the other hypothesis as they now stand, because these hypotheses have approached the question from imperfect starting points, and so the questions scholars have asked do not yield the answers they seek. These questions include whether John of Damascus had access to the canonical Qur'an which is used by Muslims today, or an alternative version of the Qur'an; and if he had not had access to either, whether he had only heard of certain Suras of the Qur'an without any knowledge of the rest of the book.[1] In either case, the question arises whether John of Damascus knew enough Arabic either to have read the Qur'an or spoken with those who had.[2] In all of these lines of enquiry, the premise has been taken that the Qur'an as we know it today was available for study widely enough for someone like John to have had access to it, and the only question has been whether John was able to access it linguistically and, to a lesser extent, practically. As far as we know, the earliest version of the Qur'an to have appeared in Greek dates from around 870, but the possibility exists that earlier translations were made.[3]

---

1 This is the view espoused by Merrill, followed by Meyendorff. Merrill, 'John of Damascus on Islam', p. 43, and Meyendorff, 'Byzantine View of Islam'.

2 Sahas chases this question from the perspective of the Greek life, which Louth has shown is rather late, and not reliable for the historical details of John's life. Sahas assumes that John was in his administrative position at the Caliphate long enough after Abd al-Malik's reforms that he had to have understood Arabic in order to conduct the affairs of the state. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 46. This assumption, however, is based on the Greek life and an anonymous life which dates from at least the thirteenth century. More relevant is his suggestion that John would not have been isolated from Arabic at St. Sabas Monastery, about which more is said below.

3 K. Versteegh, 'Greek Translations of the Qur'an in Christian Polemics (9th century AD)', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 141 (1991), pp. 52–68. The first Byzantine polemicist to quote extensively from the Qur'an was Nicetas of Byzantium in the mid-ninth century, although Nicetas' version of the Qur'an was clearly not 'canonical', nor does it appear to have survived. See now also K. Förstel, *Schiften zum Islam von Arethas und*

 DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_005

Instead of following on that trajectory, I will situate John in his historical context, and by considering his life and works engage in a brief analysis of the evidence that John knew Arabic. Then, pursuing our study through the prism of modern scholarship on the Qur'an, I will approach all of the material John has written concerning Islam as though it were potentially 'Qur'anic', without assuming that such material was drawn directly from the Qur'an as we now know it. In the majority of cases in which John shows a knowledge of the Qur'an, another account for that knowledge can be proposed; namely that whether or not the Damascene could have had access to the Qur'an in written form, it is more probable that John gathered 'Qur'anic' material by word of mouth. John of Damascus would have drawn on those around him for information regarding Islam, many of whom would have been familiar with different Islamic customs and beliefs, some of which also appear in the Qur'an, and some of which were likely perceived to be from there, but originating other places, whether ultimately finding their path into the Qur'an or not. The evidence found in John's work is not sufficient either to advance the theory that the Qur'an was already available in its current canonical form, or that Islamic practice was developed to such an extent to warrant the criticism that John distorts Islamic beliefs and practices.[4] The possibility that the text of the Qur'an had been officially fixed by John's time should not be precluded, but neither should it be assumed. More importantly, however, the probability that John would have had access to a 'canonical' text, and appreciated the value of accessing it, should be seriously questioned. Finally, by considering an example of an alternative source on which John may have drawn for information to write his treatise, one can offer an equally plausible explanation for the source of John's knowledge of Islam, and provide a more reasonable explanation for that knowledge.

The Life of John of Damascus

As I said in the introduction, we are only informed about John's life through relatively late sources, and this makes drawing firm conclusions about his

Euthymios Zigabenos und Fragmentte der griechischen Koranübersetzung: griechisch-deutsche Textausgabe (Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009).

4 So argues Griffith, who seems to be operating under the older assumption of a fully developed Islam by the mid-eighth century. S. H. Griffith, 'Free Will in Christian Kalam: The Doctrine of Theodore Abu Qurrah', *PdO* 14 (1987), pp. 79–107, at 84. For the characterization that John distorts Islamic practices, see S. H. Griffith, 'Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam: Constantinople and the Church in the Holy Land in the Ninth Century', *Medieval Encounters: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue* 3.3 (1997), pp. 231–65, at 256.

motivations and knowledge about Islam difficult. For information about him we are largely reliant on hagiographical and historical sources written more than a century after his death.[5] The earliest extant biography is in Greek, and dates from no earlier than the 10th century. This work claims to be based on a prior Arabic work written by a 'John, the Patriarch of Jerusalem,' the likely candidates being John VI (r. c. 838–42) and John the VII (r. 964–66). In any case, the extant life and its author are so far removed in time from our John that trusting the account for reliable historical information about John's life is problematic. Nevertheless, we are able to say a few things about his life with some certainty, as we have a few incidental reports on him nearly contemporaneous with him, and there are other things that can be gleaned from his writings.

He was probably born between 650 and 675. This date-range seems likely given when we think he died, which is around 750.[6] It is reported in both Greek and Arabic sources that his father served as a financial administrator for the caliph Abd al-Malik (685–705),[7] and so John was well-educated, growing up in Damascus around the conquering elite but also still in the midst of a vibrant Romano-Hellenic culture. It was common for sons to follow in their fathers' professions, and we have further reasons to think that John had done so.[8] This in itself makes John a key point of reference for any study of the permeation of Islamic ideas in the Roman Christian world of Syria and Palestine. A classical education is one part of John's background that is beyond doubt. From examining his works alone, one can detect that he received the best of that now famous *paideia*, an education that by John's time included Christian formation as well.[9] This education included what we often think of as the 'liberal arts' today. Those who could afford it were given instruction both in academic subjects such as philosophy, rhetoric, and grammar, but they could also expect

5 For this and the following I am deeply indebted to the valuable study of the Damascene by Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 3–14. Also see M.-F. Auzépy, 'De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIIIe–IXe Siècles): Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène', *TM* 12 (1994), pp. 183–218.

6 Theophanes the Chroncler in an entry in his chronicle for the year 750 refers to John as having already passed away by then.

7 Theophanes calls him 'γενικὸς λογοθέτης', (C. De Boor (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* 2 vols. (Georg Olms, 1963), pp. 365–66, AM 6183), a term whose meaning is somewhat unclear. Other historians such as Michael the Syrian record that he was the secretary to 'Abd al-Malik. See Mango's note in C. Mango and R. Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813* (Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 510.

8 John is compared to the evangelist Matthew, who was a tax collector, in the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (See Mansi 13.357B).

9 On *paideia* and how Christianity influenced it and was influenced by it, see W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Belknap Press, 1961).

physical training and moral formation as well. It was a thorough education that shaped a person for his adult life as a productive contributing citizen to the local city.

It has been demonstrated by several that John was capable of meticulous detail in his writing, quoting others at length verbatim, and that he could write highly advanced theological and poetical works.[10] This is perhaps one element of John's life that has gone under emphasized in a full analysis of John's knowledge of Islam. In particular, John's demonstrated attention to minute detail means that explanations for his specific knowledge of Islam that include he was either careless or failed to engage in due diligence in informing himself are neither realistic nor plausible.

John's family name, Sarjun, implies a Syrian provenance but most scholars have taken the view that John was probably not an Arab.[11] Of course the question of whether John was an 'Arab' or not is perhaps a fraught one, as the definition of an Arab in the 21st century has not settled, let alone that in the 8th century.[12] After following in his father's footsteps in Damascus, and serving as a financial administrator during the reign of Abd al-Malik (685–705), at some point in the early eighth century he moved either to a monastery near Jerusalem, which may be the well-known monastery of St. Sabas, or to Jerusalem itself to act

10 See my work below on John and the Qur'an, and A. Louth, 'St. John Damascene: Preacher and Poet', in M. Cunningham and P. Allen (eds.), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Brill, 1998), pp. 247–66.

11 D. J. Sahas, 'The Arab Character of The Christian Disputation with Islam: The Case of John of Damascus (ca. 655–ca. 749)', in B. Lewis and F. Niewöhner (eds.), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter* (Otto Harrasowitz, 1992), pp. 185–205, at 204. Also Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam*, p. 43. This is despite the fact that Mansour, John's name prior to his life as a monk, is of Arabic derivation, and that it is well known that there were many Arabs living in Roman Syria by this time. This view aside, debate on exactly what constitutes an 'Arab' directly affects any considerations of John of Damascus and the terminology we choose to describe him.

12 At the time of writing, a colleague of mine argues passionately that the Damascene is an Arab, on the basis that he must have known Arabic, is always depicted in iconography wearing a turban, and came from Syria with the surname 'Mansour'. The second of these is an obvious stereotype, but serves to illustrate the continuing problem of identity and in particular what constitutes an 'Arab.' Averil Cameron has suggested that Byzantines in John's situation must have had an identity crisis, although she does not suggest this on the basis of whether or not he considered himself an Arab, but only as a result of his changing circumstances. See Cameron, 'New Themes and Styles', p. 125. Also, on the question of Arab identity, see Retsö's valuable work: J. Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (Routledge, 2003).

as a patriarchal adviser.[13] It is presumed he wrote much of what we have of his works today at this stage of his life, while accessing either the patriarchal libraries in Jerusalem, or the library at St. Sabas, both of which were excellent libraries.[14] He was clearly well connected, and aware of events taking place in the empire, and had access to materials written recently in Sinai, for his writings show support of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680–81) and the Council of Trullo (692),[15] and he quotes Anastasius of Sinai (d. c. 700).[16] His treatises on Iconoclasm mention specific events that took place in Constantinople as late as 730.[17] He died around the year 750, as Theophanes mentions him in his historical chronicle under the entry for 742, but he is anathematized as though dead at the Iconoclast Council of Hieria in 754.[18]

The likelihood of John having been raised in Damascus, and the fact of his excellent education and extreme attention to detail, along with the probability that he inherited his father's position working for the caliphate, all collude to make a strong case that John was well-positioned to have gathered some of the best information about Islam that could be acquired there.

13 V. S. Conticello, 'Jean Damascène', in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* (Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 2000), pp. 989–1012. It has long been taken for granted that John moved to St. Sabas, but this assumption is similarly based on the late historical sources we have for John's life, which Louth summarizes in his work. It is now known, however, that St. Sabas was seen as a beacon of orthodoxy in the centuries following John's death, and prominent Melkite theologians were frequently attached to it in the sources to add verisimilitude to their orthodoxy, and theological excellence. See J. Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Peeters, 2001) for study of that issue. Conticello does a good job showing that there is really no positive evidence for John's move to St. Sabas that is either contemporary with him, or even datable shortly after his death.

14 See the collection of articles in Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage* for the depth of material found at St. Sabas.

15 B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 5 vols. (Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29, 1969–88) vol. III, p. 190, ln. 6.

16 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. II, p. 112, ln. 39, and p. 171, ln. 19.

17 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. III, p. 103, ln. 25–30. Also see A. Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises On the Divine Images* (SVS Press, 2003), pp. 10–14.

18 De Boor (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 417, ln. 16–22, AM 6234; Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 578. For the anathema against John (called by his Arabic name 'Mansour' in order to slur him) see J. D. Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* 31 vols. (1759–98) vol. XIII, 356C–D, also found in D. J. Sahas (trans.), *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 168.

John of Damascus and Arabic

If at least a *terminus ante quem* for John's death (754) has been determined, the date of his birth remains uncertain.[19] Since the traditional sources for John of Damascus' life, such as hagiographic vitae, are difficult to depend on, and narrate events that the modern historian struggles to accept at face value, details from those lives such as that John was well-versed in the books of the Muslims and that he knew Arabic, will not be used here to argue in favor of the Damascene's proficiency in Arabic.[20] However, some new research on the region of Palestine where John was working, as well as on the Melkite circles in which John traveled, and where he lived, make it seem increasingly likely that John was in regular contact with Arabic speakers, even among Christians. Taken together with a small piece of textual evidence provided below, we can with a degree of certainty say that John knew some Arabic.

Language distribution throughout the region of the former Roman Empire in the seventh and eighth centuries has been studied, and we now have much better information about which languages were used in what regions, even if greater detail is still lacking. Ironically, while Greek literary production of the traditional sort in the empire itself seems to virtually come to stop from the mid-seventh century up to ca. 780, writing in Greek continued to thrive among the Chalcedonian monastic communities around Jerusalem throughout the eighth century.[21] The degree to which Greek learning was still prevalent throughout the entire Syrian-Palestinian region stretching from Jerusalem in the south to Nisibis in the north can be witnessed in the interest taken in the textbook of Greek grammar by Michael Syncellus (c. 760–846), much of which appears to have been written in the vicinity of Jerusalem, but which gained wide currency

19 J. Nasrallah, *Saint Jean de Damas: Son Époque—Sa Vie—Son Oeuvre* (Imprimerie Saint Paul, 1950) and Auzépy, 'Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène'.

20 Auzépy lays out the evidence, and what exactly is known of John's life. Auzépy, 'Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène'.

21 It should be added that certain kinds of writing did develop during this period, most notably Erotapokriseis, or dialogue literature. For its development, see Y. Pappadoyannakis, 'Instruction by Question and Answer: The Case of Late Antique and Byzantine Erotapokriseis', in S. F. Johnson (ed.), *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Ashgate, 2006), pp. 91–106. For the use of Greek in Palestine for the period, see C. Mango, 'Greek Culture in Palestine after the Arab Conquest', in G. Cavallo, G. D. Gregorio, and M. Maniaci (eds.), *Scritture, Libri e Testi nelle Aree Provinciali di Bisanzio Atti del seminario di Erice, 18–25 settembre 1988* (Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo, 1991), pp. 149–60, at 149–50, and Whitby, 'Greek Historical Writing after Procopius'.

in even traditionally Syriac-speaking areas, such as Edessa.[22] In addition, the large body of Greek literature produced by John of Damascus himself, as well as by other authors, should be considered as valuable evidence for the continuity and importance of Greek well throughout the eighth century.[23]

As a literary language, Syriac appears to have fared not much the worse. At the very least, the Islamic conquests did not hinder Syriac book production throughout Mesopotamia, and as far south as Damascus.[24] In fact, during the seventh and eighth centuries greater attention to detail was taken by Syriac scribes in their translations of Greek texts, a fact which suggests both languages were still of great importance.[25] Theophilus of Edessa (695–785) wrote extensively during this period (on history and astrology), as did Timothy I (c. 728–823), Isho'Barnun (c. 744–828), Jacob of Edessa (c. 640–708), and the author of the Zuqnin Chronicle (c. 775).[26] Much of the Syriac written in the eighth century seems to have been composed in the region of modern Iraq, but this did not stop these texts from circulating more widely. George Syncellus (d. c. 810), a monk from Palestine, wrote an historical chronicle that he took with him to Constantinople.[27] He collected a great deal of material that he had intended to use to continue the work he had begun in Palestine; in Constantinople however, this work remained incomplete. Syncellus passed the text on to Theophanes the Confessor who continued the work of his predecessor using his materials, one of which was arguably the Syriac work of Theophilus of Edessa (presumably by now in Greek translation), currently conventionally identified as the so-called 'Eastern Source'.[28] Additionally,

22 Mango, 'Greek Culture in Palestine', pp. 153–55.

23 See Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature*, for a summary of the extant sources.

24 M. M. Mango, 'The Production of Syriac Manuscripts, 400–740 AD', in G. Cavallo, G. D. Gregorio, and M. Maniaci (eds.), *Scritture, Libri e Testi nelle Aree Provinciali di Bisanzio Atti del seminario di Erice, 18–25 settembre 1988* (1991), pp. 161–80, at 179. See also the map of cities where Syriac books were produced on p. 180.

25 S. Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning', in N. Garsoian, T. Matthews, and R. Thompson (eds.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1982), pp. 17–34, at 22–25.

26 S. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1997), pp. 57–65 and Brock, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', give a full list of the Syriac sources.

27 On Synkellus, see the introduction to W. Adler and P. Tuffin (trans.), *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

28 For a summary of George Syncellus and his work, see L. I. Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad: A Source Critical Study in the Historiography of the Early Medieval Near East', in

Syriac texts continued to circulate in Palestine and Syria, as can be seen from the large number of seventh-century works that survived in one form or another up to the present day.[29] It is less probable that Syriac writing continued so extensively among the Chalcedonians, encouraged as they may have felt to write in Greek.[30] The Greek language was used by some as a litmus test for certifying the Chalcedonian Orthodoxy of particular writers, although this was primarily relevant when it came to liturgical writing. The survival of numerous Chalcedonian manuscripts in Syriac witnesses to the fact that Chalcedonian authorship did not require a 'Greek' pedigree and that Chalcedonian writing in the Syriac language did continue. Sufficient knowledge of Syriac was still available at the Chalcedonian monastery of St. Sabas in the early ninth century in order to translate the Syriac works of Isaac of Nineveh into Greek.[31]

As regards Arabic, the situation is slightly more complex. Arabic was naturally used by Christians orally from a very early date for commerce, and in social spheres, but it was not until sometime during the reigns of the Caliphs ʿAbd al-Malik (685–692) and al-Walid (705–715) that the caliphate began to insist on the use of Arabic in administrative affairs exclusively in the central Islamic lands.[32] This had a direct impact on the degree to which Arabic would be used among Christians as a written language. In several articles, Sidney Griffith has shown that among Chalcedonian Orthodox communities in Palestine, of which St. Sabas's is a prime example, Arabic quickly became the *lingua franca* in the eighth century.[33] At Melkite Chalcedonian communities in Palestine,

L. I. Conrad and A. Cameron (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 317–401. For Theophanes' project and his use of the Eastern Source see Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, pp. xliii–lxiii.

29 Brock, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', pp. 17–36.

30 As far as I know, there is no well-known Chalcedonian figure writing in Syriac in the eighth century. This is in stark contrast to prominent non-Chalcedonian Syriac authors, such as those listed above.

31 S. Brock, 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', *Journal of the Syriac Academy* III (1977), pp. 1–17, at 15.

32 J. B. Chabot (ed.), *Anonymi Auctoris Chronicon ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1916–20), CSCO 81, 298, trans. A. Palmer (ed.), *The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool University Press, 1993), pp. 208–09. See also Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, pp. 125–28.

33 See S. H. Griffith, 'The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic', *MW* 78 (1988), pp. 1–28, S. H. Griffith, 'From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods', *DOP* 51 (1997), pp. 11–33, and the articles in S. H. Griffith, *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic: Muslim-Christian Encounters in the Early Islamic Period* (Variorum, 2002).

and at St. Sabas's in particular, one scholar has commented that Arabic was in such currency that by the end of the ninth century there were whole scribal schools writing in Arabic.[34] In some ways this might not be surprising, cut off as the Palestinian Christians were from the Empire and from Greek theological debate.[35] Developing their own particular theological nuances would also have resulted from the need to witness to their own communities, as well as to the larger Muslim world around them.

Contrary to what seems to have taken place among the Syriac non-Chalcedonian communities, Orthodox Chalcedonians appear to have begun articulating their theology in Arabic in written form possibly as early as 737, with the tract 'On the Triune Nature of God' our earliest evidence.[36] The date at which 'On the Triune Nature of God' was written is the subject of scholarly debate, and appears unresolved. The scribe who authored the text wrote of Christianity, "If this religion were not truly from God, it would not have stood so unshakably for seven hundred and forty-six years."[37] Samir Khalil Samir dated the work to either 737 or 755, on the basis that the scribe used the Alexandrian world dating system beginning at the incarnation, and so the date found in the text needed eight or nine years added to it or subtracted from it to arrive at the date of the common era. Swanson argued that the Melkites writing in Palestine used the Alexandrian world era dating from Christ's crucifixion exclusively up to the year 900, which would yield a date of either 771 or 788.[38] Hoyland, following Swanson, dated the text to 788.[39] But Griffith has argued against this, by showing that it was more likely for scribes from Palestine to have counted from the incarnation, and re-dates the text to 755.[40] Griffith does, however, seem to overlook Samir's other observation that one might need to subtract

34 W. Heffening is responsible for first calling the abundance of such activity at St. Sabas a "scribal school". Griffith has built on that idea in his work, and the evidence has pushed the use of Arabic in the monasteries earlier and earlier, as I discuss below. Griffith, 'The Monks of Palestine', p. 6.

35 Griffith, 'Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam'.

36 M. Gibson (ed.), *An Arabic Version of The Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles with a treatise On the Triune Nature of God* (C. J. Clay and Sons, 1899).

37 Neither the Arabic text nor its translation is found in Gibson's edition, who did not publish several lines from the treatise. For these, and the translation, see S. K. Samir, 'The Earliest Arab Apology for Christianity (c. 750)', in S. K. Samir and J. S. Nielsen (eds.), *Christian Arabic Apologetics During the Abbasid Period (750–1258)* (Brill, 1994), pp. 57–114.

38 M. Swanson, 'Some Considerations for the Dating of Fī tatlīt Allāh al-wāhid (Sin. Ar. 154) and al-Ǧāmi wuǧūh al-īmān (BL Or. 4950)', *PdO* 18 (1993), pp. 115–42.

39 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, p. 503.

40 Griffith, 'From Aramaic to Arabic', pp. 24–30.

eight or nine years from 746 rather than add them.[41] The exact date is thus still unknown, but seems most likely to be either 737 or 755.

Given even the suggested later date of 788 for the tract, there is good reason to think that Arabic and knowledge of Qur'anic sayings were circulating amongst scholars and monks in Palestine when it seems John wrote his work on Islam in the 740s. Samir Khalil Samir has shown that the author of the Arabic tract, who was a Christian of Palestinian origin, was "impregnated with the Koranic culture".[42] It is unlikely that such an extensive knowledge of Qur'anic expressions as identified in the text could have been transmitted to Christians over the course of only a single generation, and so John would have been familiar with numerous Qur'anic expressions, or versions of expressions, given his coreligionist's apparently extensive use of such expressions at most a generation later. Further, Griffith has pointed to several pieces of evidence that Arabic Christian writing began earlier then the third quarter of the eighth century, as has been previously supposed.[43] Someone of John's stature and knowledge was likely to have been surrounded by Arabic from his childhood. Even if he had moved from the caliphate in Damascus to Jerusalem or the monastery of St. Sabas in the first two decades of the eighth century, it seems Arabic would have followed him. One example of the use of Arabic at St. Sabas is found in the life of St. Stephen the 'Sabaite' (c. 725–796), who is thought to have been fluent in Arabic, Greek, and Syriac.[44] Indeed, from what little evidence that exists, it seems that the Palestinian Melkite Community, of which the author of 'On the Triune Nature of God' and John of Damascus were an active part, were faster in acquiring Arabic knowledge than those in other parts of the Greek-, Syriac- and Coptic-speaking Arab-controlled Umayyad Empire.

There is also some textual evidence to support the view that John of Damascus was familiar with Arabic, even if no evidence has been found of him writing in Arabic. In *On Heresies 100*, John makes use of an unusual Greek word to describe how the Ishmaelites have referred to Christians. "Καλοῦσι δὲ ἡμᾶς

41 Samir had previously established that Melkite manuscripts of Sinaitic or South Palestinian origin needed eight or nine years subtracted to them rather than added, and applies this to the treatise here. See Samir, 'The Earliest Arab Apology', p. 63 and K. Samir, 'L'ère de l'Incarnation dans les manuscrits melkites du 11e au 14e siècle', *OCP* 53 (1987), pp. 193–201.

42 Samir, 'The Earliest Arab Apology', pp. 108–09. The author of the tract appears to quote the Qur'anfreely and regularly, at least eight times. See Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu*, p. 105.

43 See Griffith, 'From Aramaic to Arabic', where Griffith summarizes the evidence and gives bibliography.

44 J. C. Lamoreaux (ed.), *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas* 2 vols. (Peeters, 1999), and see Mango, 'Greek Culture in Palestine', p. 151.

ἑταιριαστάς, ὅτι, φησίν, ἑταῖρον τῷ θεῷ παρεισάγομεν λέγοντες εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν θεοῦ καὶ θεόν."[45] "They call us *associators* (ἑταιριαστάς), because, it is said, we introduce an associate to God, calling Christ the Son of God and God." The Greek word 'ἑταιριαστάς' is remarkable in this context, and requires comment. It appears to be the first use of the word in Greek, with John of Damascus its coiner. The verb 'ἑταιρίζω' means 'to be an associate' of someone, and used transitively in the Middle Voice can connote 'to associate with oneself'. But the idea of being someone who associates one with others, or with God as is the case in this context, does not seem to have appeared in the Greek thought-world prior to John. While the concepts of both polytheism (πολύθεος) and idolatry (εἰδωλολατρεία) were familiar to Greek writers, the idea of being an 'associator', was not.[46]

This in itself suggests a particular meaning that John was attempting to convey to his readership, perhaps most notably that the Muslims do not appear to be criticizing the Christians for idolatry or polytheism in referring to Christ as God. Idolatry was not something for which the Muslims were incapable of accusing the Christians, and indeed it is a charge that a few lines later John identifies Muslims as making against Christians for venerating the cross.[47] John's term here would, therefore, arguably appear to be a calque on the Arabic term *mushrikun* or 'associators'. The Arabic term *mushrik* (sg.) has received a great deal of attention in modern scholarship, and its meaning is no longer thought to be straightforward. The accusation of *shirk* (the root of *mushrik*) was made in the Qur'an by Muhammad's followers against his opponents: *shirk* is contrasted with monotheism.[48] Until recently it had been assumed that Islam developed in a polytheistic environment, amidst people who practiced polytheism. However, Hawting has argued on the basis of Islamic sources that the *mushrikun* found in the Qur'an were more probably not polytheists but monotheists who were perceived by Muhammad's followers as failing to practice

45 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 63, ln. 61–62.

46 Polytheism was in use among Greek authors as a term referring to someone who worships many gods at least as early as Procopius (Historia Arcana 11), and John of Damascus knows this usage himself. See Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. III, p. 179, treatise 3, ln. 85, and vol. II, p. 17, ln. 28. Idolatry, although not attested in the Greek Septuagint, can be found among Paul's letters in its normal derogatory sense of worshipping something other than the uncreated God.

47 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 64, ln. 78. "Διαβάλλουσι δὲ ἡμᾶς ὡς εἰδωλολάτρας προσκυνοῦντας τὸν σταυρόν." "They also slander us as being idolaters for venerating the cross."

48 The Qur'an often refutes *shirk* to its antinomy monotheism. A clear statement against it is found in sura 112. It is seen as the greatest of all sins, and an unforgivable offence. See M. Mir, "Polytheism and Atheism" in J. D. McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* (Brill, 2001) vol. 4, pp. 158–162.

monotheism to its full extent.[49] Muhammad's followers, in an effort to condemn them, referred to them polemically as *mushrikun*. His conclusions have important consequences for our text. John of Damascus' parsing of Greek terminology to find a suitable new Greek word to describe the accusation of *shirk* fits in well with Hawting's case. But further, one would expect the user of such a word to be familiar with the language of his accusers, in order to be able to distinguish between the accusations of idolatry, polytheism, and 'associationism'. John's use of 'ἑταιριαστάς' when πολυθεία and εἰδωλολατρεία would have conveyed approximate accusations, indicates a fluency with the Arab cultural milieu, and most probably its language.[50] The term is a highly technical piece of theological vocabulary, and although John does not perhaps show a similar 'impregnation' with Qur'anic vocabulary, it is nonetheless some evidence for a close familiarity with Arabic terminology.

One can also find other traces of the nuances used in Qurʾanic or Islamic phraseology coming into the Damascene's Greek treatise here, quite apart from cases where he might be seen to be quoting passages from the Qurʾan. For example, John writes that Muhammad said that the word of God and his spirit, "εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Μαρίαν", or "entered into Mary".[51] The terminology one might expect John of Damascus to employ to describe the events of the Incarnation would be that found in the Gospels, and especially that of Luke, as it contains the most substantial material on the Incarnation. But the expression above is foreign to the Gospel of Luke and the other Gospels, in which the Holy Spirit "comes upon" Mary (ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ).[52] Neither John's other patristic sources, nor the Damascene's other writings on the Incarnation and Mary appears to contain the expression.[53] As John claims to be repeating what Muhammad has taught, no other conclusion seems reasonable than that John was repeating

49 Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*, pp. 67–88.

50 Hawting mistakenly identifies 'ἑταιριαστάς' with prostitution in his own work, missing the potential significance of John's terminology. John's use should also have implications for Hawting's argument regarding early intra-monotheistic disputation in the Qurʾan, which is given more credence if early Greek texts such as ours display a similar kind of parsing in the language used. If John did not think of the Ishmaelites as accusing him of the former two, it is certainly clear that the Ishmaelites had a well developed sense of meaning for these words, and Christian selection of a word which means 'associationism', rather than idolatry or polytheism lends additional credence to Hawting's case. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*, pp. 83–84.

51 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 61, ln. 20–21.

52 Luke 1:35.

53 A basic search was run using Thesaurus Linguae Graecae on John's work, as well as all authors preceding him, and on whom he drew for his work.

the alternative expression for the virgin birth, as handed down in the early Islamic tradition. Indeed, John's explanation is a gloss on what is found in the Qurʾan in Sura 66.12, where the spirit is breathed into Mary: "And Mary, the daughter of ʿImran, who guarded her private parts; so We breathed into it some of Our Spirit, and she counted true the Words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and was one of the obedient".[54] As can be seen, John's turn of phrase summarizes Qurʾanic teaching. Of course it is possible that John was reading a Greek translation of the traditional Islamic expression which circulated among Greek-speaking Christians in Palestine, but there is no evidence for this supposition prior to John, and John's own expression is not a direct quotation, as the Qurʾan has the Spirit being "breathed into" Mary, and not simply "entering" her. It appears likely that John learned the expression in Arabic, and translated the Islamic idea into Greek.

A certain amount of familiarity with 'Qurʾanic' language, therefore, should be presumed when assessing the Damascene's text, whether or not John had the Qurʾan available to study, and whether or not his Arabic was highly developed to the point of literary fluency. Distinctively theological ideas are familiar to John in the Qurʾanic idiom. It appears that inter-confessional transmission of Islamic expressions and ideas began to permeate the Christian intellectual discourse of John's time. The medium and terminology Christians used to explicate their theology necessarily took on certain Qurʾanic expressions, as is shown in the very earliest Christian tract in Arabic.[55] The degree to which the

54 All quotations from the Qur'an will be from Jones' English translation. A. Jones (trans.), *The Qurʾān* (Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007).

55 Apart from the direct quotations from the Qur'an, the Arabic tract is littered with 'Qur'anic' terminology and expression as is demonstrated by Wansbrough, who points out that, "The most remarkable feature of the Sinai document, a Christian apologia, is its 'Quranic' language. Explicit reference to Muslim scripture is meager (eight instances) but the frequency and distribution of what has come to be regarded as distinctively Quranic phraseology are impressive." Wansbrough then provides a list of examples, followed by the comment, "Were it not for explicit (and more or less correctly given) reference to the canonical Quranic text, it might just be possible to argue that the 'Muslim' diction of this particular Trinitarian treatise contains vestiges of a pre-Islamic liturgical language, adopted later by the Muslim community for its own liturgy and, ultimately scripture." Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu*, p. 105. Whether intended or not, that is indeed the idea taken up by Christoph Luxenberg in his provocative thesis, which essentially concludes with Wansbrough's postulation of a "pre-Islamic liturgical language" later taken up by Muslims. See C. Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache* (Das Arabische Buch, 2000). Now translated, and hereafter referred to in the English edition as C. Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the*

author of that tract shows a familiarity with 'Qur'anic' language cannot have developed over a single generation, nor could he have gained such familiarity had he lived in isolation from Muslims. We should posit a similar familiarity for John, even if on a lower scale. He was highly educated (the Greek life even has him educated in the "books of the Saracens"). His family held high administrative offices in Damascus from the seventh century, and he is given an Arabic name in the Greek and Arabic sources.[56] His position with regard to the Caliph for the first part of his life, added to that he was part of the Palestinian Melkite community, all contribute to the view that the Damascene knew some Arabic, and was surrounded by Qur'anic phraseology on a day to day basis.

The Qur'an and its Apparent Use Among Christians

Scholars in the field of modern Qur'anic Studies are in a quandary.[57] They are at a loss to give answers to certain fundamental questions regarding the text. The date of its appearance, the date of its codification, and even the language in which it was first written are all currently a matter of debate.[58] As explained at the beginning of this chapter, I will not argue a point regarding the time frame for the origins of the Qur'an. That task is more properly a problem for the Islamicist, and is receiving a great deal of attention amongst Islamicists at the moment.[59] Instead, let us turn to our author, and to one of his prede-

Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran (Verlag Hans Schiler, 2007).

56 Conticello, 'Jean Damascène'.

57 Donner refers to Qur'anic Studies as being in a state of "disarray". F. M. Donner, 'The Qur'ān in Recent Scholarship—Challenges and Desiderata', in G. S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 29–50. Angelika Neuwirth has even referred to them as being in a "hoffnungsloses chaos" or hopeless chaos. A. Neuwirth, 'Archäologie einer Heiligen Schrift. Überlegungen zum Koran vor seiner Kompilation', in C. Burgmer (ed.), *Streit um den Koran: die Luxenberg-Debatte: Standpunkte und Hintergrèunde* (3rd edn., Schiller, 2004), pp. 82–97, at 82.

58 Donner, 'The Qur'ān in Recent Scholarship'.

59 Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran.* Although Luxenberg's work has come under criticism for its weak scholarship, and the central idea that the Qur'an was originally written in Aramaic has received little or no acceptance, some of his observations about certain words and phrases owing their inheritance to Aramaic cannot be ignored. For a scathing critique of the problems with Luxenberg's controversial work, see F. D. Blois, 'Review of *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*', *JQS* 5.1 (2003), pp. 92–97. For a more balanced appraisal, see the collection

cessors, Anastasius of Sinai (d.c. 700), in order to determine if the theory of an early Qur'an can be advanced from examining their work. The argument has been made that such texts can be used as evidence for an early dating of the Qur'an.[60] The traditional account of the origins of the Qur'an outlined in the introduction above holds that the Qur'an was officially canonized by the caliph ʿUthman in the years of his reign, 644–656. Yet, the recent now-famous find in the University of Birmingham's library of ancient folia from the Qur'an nothwithstanding, no indisputable material evidence remains of the Qur'an prior to the last decade of the seventh century, and the literary tradition, which generally places its origins at the time of ʿUthman, apparently originates from a time no earlier than the middle of the eighth century.[61] Additionally, scholars are in no agreement over the dating of complete intact Qur'ans from a period earlier than the beginning of the ninth century.[62]

The consequences of this are that the earliest supposed witnesses we have that the Qur'an was assembled in a time prior to the early ninth century are from authors such as John of Damascus who allude only to 'γραφή' and sometimes 'βίβλος', both of which words are subject to different interpretations, and neither of which can be taken to mean 'Qur'an', a word whose own provenance is uncertain.[63] The former usually means a 'piece of writing', and can often, though by no means exclusively, refer to Scripture, Christian holy

of articles in G. S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), several of which take up some of Luxemberg's points more seriously.

60 Griffith, in his article on Anastasius of Sinai, argues that it would "strain credulity" to suggest something other than that the Qur'an was prevalent at the time Anastasius wrote, prior to 681. "The perception of recognizable Islamic and Qur'anic teaching in the ideas Anastasios ascribes to the Arabs means that these ideas, and probably the Qur'an in which they were expressed, were well developed and widespread among the conquering Arabs by the second half of the seventh century." S. H. Griffith, 'Anastasios of Sinai, the Hodegos, and the Muslims', *GOTR* 32.4 (1987), pp. 341–58, at 356. Sahas implies nearly the same on the basis of the Greek life of John of Damascus, which says John was educated with the books of the Saracens. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 40.

61 See Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 3 for the traditions. A small fragment of what may be one of our earliest Qur'ans has been discovered in a library at the University of Birmingham, which appears to be datable to the seventh century, and may be a part of a codex now in Paris. See http://www.bbc.com/news/business-35151643.

62 Studies remain to be done on some of the most important (and presumed earliest) codices of the Qur'an, without which much is still unknown. See F. Leemhuis, 'Codices of the Qur'ān' in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 1, pp. 347–51, and F. Déroche, 'Manuscripts of the Qur'ān' in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 3, p. 254.

63 While most Western scholars have held the meaning of the word 'Qur'an' to be derived from the Syriac 'qeryana', meaning 'scripture reading', Muslim scholars regard the word

writings. The latter is often translated as 'book' and can, in Patristic use mean 'holy book', or consolidated holy text, which might in this case by extension also be the Qurʾan. But, *biblos* may also plausibly be a collection of writings or even one writ containing several parts. It can even connote one piece of writing, much the same as it is used in English to speak, for example, of the 'Book of Matthew'.[64]

In John's own terminology in the treatise on Islam, it is also clear that the nature of γραφή may also be, paradoxically, something unwritten, at least as it is first received. In one of the passages in our text in which John sets up a dialogue between himself and some Ishmaelite interlocutors, John asks, "How did the *scripture* (ἡ γραφή) come down to your prophet, this is what we are asking. And they answer that while he was asleep the scripture *came upon* (ἐπάνω) him."[65] From this passage the term appears to have a more flexible meaning for both John and his supposed interlocutors. Clearly while it must ultimately apply to a written work, it may begin as a word from God, or a revelation, the recipient of which may only later transcribe.

We are left, therefore, with only vague references to a work of some sort in our text, which may or may not be the Qurʾan, and which the author may or may not conceive of in a written form. No author in the Christian tradition prior to the ninth century uses the term 'Qurʾan', and so if such a case for a completed, codified Qurʾan were to be made on the basis of Christian sources, it must be built on a comparison of what early authors claim is part of Islamic teaching, and passages from the Qurʾan itself.[66] But even then such a case runs a slippery slope, as direct quotations might have become part of common use prior to the organization and collection of a complete Qurʾan as we have today. As our focus here, however, is on whether or not John of Damascus had access to the Qurʾan as we know it, let us turn now to some examples from John's text

as an Arabic one, coming from 'qaraʾa, meaning 'he recited'. See M. Mir, 'Names of the Qurʾān', in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 3, p. 505.

64 Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v.

65 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 62, ln. 46.

66 The word, 'Qurʾan', does, of course, appear in the Qurʾan itself, some 70 times. However its meaning is not fixed, and it seems the word encompassed a variety of understandings. By the eighth century Islamic sources do begin using the term 'Qurʾan' more frequently. I have explained above, however, the difficulty in using the Qurʾan and these sources for evidence of the early Islamic community and its beliefs and practices. For one potentially eighth-century Islamic use, see Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 111. For the different meanings and usages of the word in the Qurʾan, see A. T. Welch, 'al-Kuran', in Bearman, Bianquis et al. (eds.), *EI*^{2} vol. 4, p. 400.

which might appear to be quotations from the Qur'an, or at least from written material which may have contained verses from the Qur'an.

John of Damascus and the Qur'an

The passages in which John of Damascus reflects Islamic ideas or material which is also found in the Qur'an are too numerous to be considered in their totality here. The Qur'an is a large text, and John of Damascus' material too extensive to make a careful study of each possible instance in detail. For a brief analysis of this material, see Appendix 2, where a table is given showing most possible dependencies. Here I will concentrate on the body of evidence which demonstrates most clearly that whatever John of Damascus was drawing on for his information regarding Islam, it cannot have been the Qur'an as we know it in its present form. It has been argued both that John could only have known four Suras from the Qur'an (and those not well), and that he must have known many more.[67] But as I have already noted, new research into early Islamic origins, encourages us to consider John's work without the prejudice of assuming an early Qur'an, and casts a new light on John's work. I have chosen to cite three examples from John's text that most strongly suggest that he was quoting either the Qur'an, or texts which quoted the Qur'an directly, and show that these examples cannot be used to support the claim that this material was taken from the Qur'an as we now know it. I will then turn to other potential sources of knowledge regarding early Islam on which I suspect John probably drew for his information.

At the beginning of John of Damascus' introduction to the teachings of Muhammad, the Damascene ascribes to Muhammad the teaching that, "Λέγει ἕνα θεὸν εἶναι ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων, μήτε γεννηθέντα μήτε γεγεννηκότα." that is, "he says there is one God maker of all, who was neither begotten nor has he begotten." It has been claimed that this is the precise content of Sura 112, and this has been used by scholars to argue John must have known the Qur'an well.[68] However, a closer consideration of the passage in fact shows otherwise. Sura 112 reads, "Say: He is God, One, God the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten." John of Damascus has the order of the expression regarding the begotten son inverted, and places God's having begotten after His being begotten. Merrill first noted this in his work in 1951, but was probably not aware of the full ramification of the discrepancy; namely that

67 D. J. Sahas, 'John of Damascus on Islam Revisited', *Abr-Nahrain*, 23 (1984–85), pp. 104–18.

68 Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 75.

the Damascene had the order of the text reversed well after the Qur'anic ordering was likely established, at least in the Palestinian milieu. It is now well known that the Qur'anic ordering is found on the inside and outside of the Dome of the Rock, and was placed there in 692.[69] It is, of course, possible to argue that John of Damascus might not have seen the text on the Dome or have been aware of it, given its small size there, but given his close proximity to Jerusalem, and the frequency with which the phrase would come to be used, the suggestion stretches the imagination. Another argument may perhaps be found in the claim that the Qur'anic ordering was not yet fully established idiom.[70] However, in this particular case, the Qur'anic ordering fits the chapter's rhyme scheme, which ends on –ad. It is thus very unlikely that the expression circulated as colloquial idiom in any form other than the ordering found inside the Dome of the Rock. What is clear from John's text, however, is that the Damascene could not have been quoting the Qur'an and Sura 112 as we know it today.[71]

Finally, it might be possible to argue that John simply carelessly repeated the content of the Qur'anic Scripture without attention to the ordering. The difficulty in arguing such a case, however, is that it has been well demonstrated that John paid meticulous attention to his sources. As already stressed above, he himself calls attention to the point that he will say nothing of his own. But it is similarly clear that he quotes sections of earlier works *verbatim.* For example, in chapters 36, 58, and 59 of the *De Fide*, John copies Maximus' letter to Marinum, and his Disputation with Pyrrhus.[72] Knorr has endeavored to show that despite the various manuscript recensions of the *Anacepalaeosis* in circulation, John identified and copied the original version, which he argues goes back to Epiphanius himself.[73] Louth has even shown that John is capable of

69 Merrill, 'John of Damascus on Islam' p. 89.

70 Such an argument might be made on the basis of the *Sanaa* fragments which unfortunately have not yet been published. It has been said, however, that some of the ordering of particular suras, as well as phrases within the suras, at times exhibit different renderings from the canonical Qur'an. If this is so, one could argue that John simply reflected one of these alternative orderings. See T. Lester, 'What is the Koran?' *Atlantic Monthly* 283.1 (1999), pp. 43–56. This, however, remains unlikely, for reasons I outline above.

71 An English translation of the History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria by Evetts also contains the inverted phrase, "begotten and does not beget" in the section dating from 766, but the translation of the Arabic is mistaken, and the Arabic text contains the Qur'anic reading. B. T. A. Evetts (ed.), *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* (P. Fages, 1910), p. 25.

72 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. II, p. 256.

73 Knorr, 'Die Parallelüberlieferung zum Panarion des Epiphanius von Salamis'.

consistently quoting himself in homilies and in his works on images *verbatim*.[74] It is perhaps hard to understand such attention to detail in our days when originality is valued over what would be judged as plagiarism, but John's environment was one in which endless and careful copying of prior sources was a central feature of the theological landscape.[75] The possibility that John simply mistakenly reproduced the content of the Sura remains, but is highly unlikely.

A long passage follows this first introduction to the beliefs of the Ishmaelites, in which the teaching of Muhammad and the Ishmaelites regarding Jesus is spelled out, but none of the material actually suggests itself to be quotations from the Qur'an. The material is presented as the teaching of Muhammad and the Ishmaelites, rather than that found in a book. The phrases "he says" and "they say" are peppered throughout the narrative, which runs for nearly two thirds of the text. The Damascene stops, at one point, to say that all of this is found in a *graphe*, which has been "brought down" to Muhammad from God. In context, the "this" (ταύτην) he refers to is all of the material, which one should understand the Damascene to be summarizing.

The "this", however, while referring to the narrative containing material found in the Qur'an, also contains material not found in the Qur'an, such as the specific content of the apparently quoted discussion between Jesus and God. Sura 5 of the Qur'an contains a story in which Jesus converses with God, but while there might be a superficial similarity to John's cited material, the content of that passage is somewhat different from what John of Damascus quotes. I place the Greek text and my translation, along with the English translation of the relevant passage from the Qur'an here:

> Καὶ ὅτι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι παρανομήσαντες ἠθέλησαν αὐτὸν σταυρῶσαι καὶ κρατήσαντες ἐσταύρωσαν τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐσταυρώθη, φησίν, οὔτε ἀπέθανεν· ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔλαβεν αὐτὸν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν διὰ τὸ φιλεῖν αὐτόν. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ λέγει, ὅτι, τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀνελθόντος εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς, ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς λέγων· Ὦ Ἰησοῦ σὺ εἶπας, ὅτι υἱός εἰμι τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ θεὸς; Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη, φησίν, ὁ Ἰησοῦς Ἵλεώς μοι, κύριε σὺ οἶδας, ὅτι οὐκ εἶπον οὐδὲ ὑπερηφανῶ εἶναι δοῦλός σου· ἀλλ' οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ παραβάται ἔγραψαν, ὅτι εἶπον τὸν λόγον τοῦτον, καὶ ἐψεύσαντο κατ' ἐμοῦ, καί εἰσι

74 Louth, 'St. John Damascene: Preacher and Poet', pp. 247–66.

75 On the nature of Florilegial composition, see M. Richard, 'Florilèges grecs' in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Le Cerf, 1964), pp. 475–512, reprinted in M. Richard, *Opera Minora*, 3 vols. (Leuven University Press, 1976–77), i, item 1. For John and his context, see Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 3–20.

> πεπλανημένοι. Καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ τερατολογῶν ἐν τῇ τοιαύτῃ συγγραφῇ γέλωτος ἄξια, ταύτην πρὸς θεοῦ ἐπ' αὐτὸν κατενεχθῆναι φρυάττεται.[76]
>
> And that the Jews, having broken the law, wanted to crucify him, but having arrested him they crucified his shadow. But Christ, it is said, was not crucified, nor did he die, for God took him up to himself because of his love for him. And he [Muhammad] says this, that when Christ went up to Heaven God questioned him saying "O Jesus, did you say that 'I am Son of God, and God'?" And Jesus, they say, answered: "Be merciful to me, Lord; you know that I did not say so, nor will I boast that I am your servant; but men who have gone astray wrote that I said this and they said lies concerning me and they have been in error". And although there are included in this scripture many more absurdities worthy of laughter, he insists that this was brought down to him from God.
>
> **Sura 5:116–117**
> And [recall] when God said, "Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as gods to the exclusion of God'?" He said, "Glory be to you. It is not for me to say what I have no right to. If I said it, You know that. You know what is in my soul. You are the one who knows fully the things that are hidden. I said to them only what You ordered me to say, 'Serve God, my Lord and your Lord'. I was a witness over them as long as I was among them. When You took me, it was You who were the watcher over them. You are witness over everything."

This is the only passage in the Qur'an in which Jesus and God are reported to be in dialogue. Here God asks Jesus if he instructed him to say that he [Jesus] and Mary were to be taken as two gods instead of him. To this Jesus responds in the negative, adding that God knows what is in his heart. The context for the passage is also different from that given by John. John of Damascus has the conversation taking place just after Jesus was rescued from the cross and taken up into Heaven. This, however, does not appear in the Qur'an at this point, but instead at Sura 4:157–58, and is not linked to the conversation between Jesus and God. Further, John's passage makes no mention of Mary, while in the Qur'an this is the background for God's question to Jesus. John, on the other hand, only a few lines earlier, can be seen assuming that Muhammad taught that Mary was the sister of Moses and Aaron. In that short passage, while John is aware that Muhammad taught of Jesus' virgin conception by the Holy Spirit,

76 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 61, ln. 25–33.

there is no suggestion that Muhammad or Muslims are under the misapprehension that Christians believe Mary to be a god. In fact, Sura 19:28 leaves the impression that Mary is the sister of Aaron, where she is explicitly called "O sister of Aaron". It seems clear, therefore, that the discrepancy between John's account and that found in the Qur'an precludes the possibility that John was quoting from the Qur'an directly.

Another Sura from the Qur'an with which John of Damascus might appear to be familiar, and from which he appears to produce content, is the Sura on Women (Sura 4). John writes,

> Οὗτος ὁ Μάμεδ πολλάς, ὡς εἴρηται, ληρωδίας συντάξας ἑκάστῃ τούτων προσηγορίαν ἐπέθηκεν, οἷον ἡ γραφὴ τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τέσσαρας γυναῖκας προφανῶς λαμβάνειν νομοθετεῖ καὶ παλλακάς, ἐὰν δύνηται, χιλίας, ὅσας ἡ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ κατάσχῃ ὑποκειμένας ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων γυναικῶν. Ἣν δ' ἂν βουληθῇ ἀπολύειν, ἣν ἐθελήσειε, καὶ κομίζεσθαι ἄλλην, ἐκ τοιαύτης αἰτίας νομοθετήσας. Σύμπονον ἔσχεν ὁ Μάμεδ Ζεῒδ προσαγορευόμενον. Οὗτος γυναῖκα ὡραίαν ἔσχεν, ἧς ἠράσθη ὁ Μάμεδ. Καθημένων οὖν αὐτῶν φησιν ὁ Μάμεδ· Ὁ δεῖνα, ὁ θεὸς ἐνετείλατό μοι τὴν γυναῖκά σου λαβεῖν. Ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη· Ἀπόστολος εἶ· ποίησον, ὥς σοι ὁ θεὸς εἶπε· λάβε τὴν γυναῖκά μου. Μᾶλλον δέ, ἵνα ἄνωθεν εἴπωμεν, ἔφη πρὸς αὐτόν· Ὁ θεὸς ἐνετείλατό μοι, ἵνα ἀπολύσῃς τὴν γυναῖκά σου. Ὁ δὲ ἀπέλυσε. Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας ἄλλας φησίν· Ἵνα κἀγὼ αὐτὴν λάβω, ἐνετείλατο ὁ θεός. Εἶτα λαβὼν καὶ μοιχεύσας αὐτὴν τοιοῦτον ἔθηκε νόμον· Ὁ βουλόμενος ἀπολυέτω τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ. Ἐὰν δὲ μετὰ τὸ ἀπολῦσαι ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἀναστρέψῃ, γαμείτω αὐτὴν ἄλλος. Οὐ γὰρ ἔξεστι λαβεῖν αὐτήν, εἰ μὴ γαμηθῇ ὑφ' ἑτέρου. Ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀπολύσῃ, γαμείτω αὐτὴν ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ βουλόμενος. Ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ γραφῇ τοιαῦτα παραγγέλλει· Ἔργασαι τὴν γῆν, ἣν ἔδωκέ σοι ὁ θεός, καὶ φιλοκάλησον αὐτήν, καὶ τόδε ποίησον καὶ τοιῶσδε, ἵνα μὴ πάντα λέγω ὡς ἐκεῖνος αἰσχρά.[77]
>
> This Muhammad, as has been said, set down many foolish sayings, and put a title on each one, such as the writing of 'Woman', in which he clearly legislates that one may have four wives and one thousand concubines if he is able, as many as he can maintain beside the four wives. But he can divorce whomsoever he pleases, if he so wishes, and take another one having created such a law. Muhammad had worked together with Zaid, to whom he had been introduced. This man had a beautiful wife whom Muhammad loved. Therefore sitting together Muhammad said to him: "Oh you, God commanded me to take your wife". And he replied, "you are

77 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, pp. 64–65, ln. 95–113.

> an apostle; do as God has told you; take my wife". Or rather, so that we may tell the story from the beginning, he said to him: "God commanded me (to tell you) that you should divorce your wife". So he divorced her. After another day he said, "God commanded me that I should take her". Then after having taken her and committing adultery with her he made this law: "Whosoever wants may divorce his wife. But after the divorce, if he wants to return to her let someone else marry her (first). For it is not permitted to take her (back) unless she married someone else. And even if a brother divorces, let his brother marry her if he so wishes". In the same writing, he sets out this kind of pronouncement: "Work the land which God gave you and care for it; and do this and in this way" … so that I may not say all of his obscenities.

John appears to set out a summary of what is contained in Sura 4, some of which one might construe him to be quoting directly. The problem with such an assertion is that the material John cites comes from various parts of the Qur'an as we currently have it, and the narrative he adduces regarding Zaid does not appear in the Qur'an at all. The first sentence in which John says Muhammad legislates regarding the number of women a person may wed is indeed found in Sura 4, right at the beginning of it. "If you fear that you will not act fairly towards those orphans, marry such of the women as it seems good to you: two, three or four each; but if you fear that you will not be fair, one [only] or what your right hands possess".[78] But the remaining material John appears to be citing is found in different places. The circumstances under which a man may divorce his wife are dealt with in the Sura on the Cow, at 2:230, and the story of Zaid effectively does not feature in the Qur'an, except by brief reference found at Sura 33:37.[79] It might again be argued that John knows well that he is drawing from different places in the Qur'an, but this is unlikely given that he ends his summary by writing, "In the same *graphe*, he sets out this kind of pronouncement …". The terminology regarding *graphe* notwithstanding, we

78 Sura 4:3.

79 The legend of Zaid and his wife Zainab has a long history in Islam, with a number of variations, perhaps resulting from the lack of direct Qur'anic reference. The principal relation of Zaid to Muhammad, namely that he was his adopted son, is not mentioned by John of Damascus, about which more is said below. Pre-Islamic law forbade the marrying of one's former adopted son's spouse, and this was only changed with the coming of Islam and the above cited verse from the Qur'an. Marriage to the former wife of an adoptive son would continue to occupy Islamic jurists in the exegesis of the Qur'an for some time. See W. M. Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 156–59.

are left to think that the "same" must lead the reader back to the *graphe* on Women, with which John began.

Where then, has John of Damascus acquired this knowledge of early Islam, and is there any chance he did have access to the Qur'an or teachings found in it through other sources? To answer that question, let us consider two works by Orthodox Christians which pre-date John's, and may provide witness to the early Islamic Scripture and/or provide information about early Islam. These are by Anastasius of Sinai (d. c. 700) and by someone who purports to be the Emperor Leo III (c. 685–741). By considering these works, we may at least be able to determine if forerunners to John in his own ecclesiastical circles had access to the Qur'an, and thus assess the probability that John could have had similar access.

Anastasius of Sinai and the Qur'an

One author who appears to be familiar with certain aspects of the Qur'an, and who might be used to adduce the theory that Orthodox Chalcedonians of Palestine had access to the Qur'an, is Anastasius of Sinai (d. c. 700), the abbot of the monastery of Mt. Sinai in the late seventh century. He was one of John of Damascus' sources for his own works, although there is no direct mention made to Anastasius' brief references to the Arabs which we will address below. On the whole there is still some considerable confusion regarding who Anastasius was, and what he has written.[80] Additionally, some of his works have made their way into Ethiopic and Coptic, and have yet to be examined.[81]

In a few limited places in a treatise devoted to the refutation of Monophysitism, Anastasius makes reference to some of the beliefs of the Arabs, and this is the source of one argument that the Qur'an was already available for study. Anastasius says that the Arabs believe Satan fell on account of not bowing down to Adam, that they think Christians believe in two gods and that god carnally begot a son, and that Jesus performed miracles as

80 J. Haldon, 'The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediteranean Society and Belief', in L. I. Conrad and A. Cameron (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 107–48. Editions of his works can be found in: M. Richard and J. A. Munitiz (eds.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Quaestiones et responsiones* (Brepols, 2006), K.-H. Uthemann (ed.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Viae dux* (Brepols, 1981), and in PG 89.

81 See P. Canart, 'Nouveaux récits du Moine Anastase' in *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines* (Belgrade, 1964).

an infant.[82] Sidney Griffith has argued that, "Given the congruence of these Arab ideas with the criticisms of Christian doctrines found in the Qur'an, it makes most sense to conclude that Anastasius is in fact reflecting the teaching of the Qur'an when he mentions what the Arabs say about Christian doctrines. And it is pertinent that he mentions these Arab ideas in a work directed against the Monophysites, because the Qur'an's criticisms of Christianity make most sense as criticisms when one recalls the likelihood that they were initially directed against the Monophysite expression of the Christian creed."[83] As evidence that Muhammad was thinking of Monophysite groups when writing about Christianity in the Qur'an, Griffith cites Trimingham's *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times.*[84] He suggests that, "One need not postulate the presence in Arabia of any fringe Christian sect to explain the critical reaction on Muhammad's part to Mary's Christian epithet 'Mother of God', an appellation particularly dear to Monophysite preachers."[85]

Griffith uses the fact that Anastasius' remarks on the Arabs appear in a work whose principle concern is Monophysitism to support his argument that the author of the Qur'an must have had Monophysites in mind when criticizing Christians, and that early Muslims must have been either ignorant or mistaken regarding standard non-Chalcedonian theology, particularly with reference to the Theotokos, or 'Mother of God'. Anastasius makes passing reference to how one must enter into dialogue with the Arabs, by saying that one must first condemn the heresies which they condemn, so that they will be more able and ready to listen to further truths. In support of his argument, Griffith cites three examples from Anastasius of heresies to be condemned: a belief in two gods, a belief in a carnally begotten son of God, and making prostration to any created being. I quote Griffith's translation of Anastasius in full,

82 Uthemann (ed.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Viae Dux*, p. 9 and 238.

83 Griffith, 'Anastasios of Sinai', p. 356. Griffith has recently restated the view perhaps even more strongly; "What is more, in the same work Anastasius became one of the first Christian writers on record to take cognizance of religious ideas of the Muslim Arabs and even to quote the Qur'an …" S. H. Griffith, 'John of Damascus and the Church in Syria in the Umayyad Era: The Intellectual and Cultural Milieu of Orthodox Christians in the World of Islam', *Hugoye* 2 (2008), <http://syrcom.cua.edu/syrcom/Hugoye>, par. 14.

84 J. S. Trimingham, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (Longman Group, 1979). Trimingham is usually indebted to the chronicle of Michael the Syrian and the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus for his information regarding the confessional makeup of Christians in pre-Islamic Arabia. While both of these do witness to Monophysite Christian presence in Arabia, there is nothing in them to suggest Chalcedonian Orthodoxy or Arianism were not also present.

85 Griffith, 'Anastasios of Sinai', p. 349.

> Because, prior to any discussion at all, we must condemn however many false notions about us the opponent entertains, as when we set out to converse with Arabs we have first to condemn anyone who says, 'Two gods,' or anyone who says, 'God has carnally begotten a son,' or anyone who makes prostration as to God, to any creature whatever, in heaven or on earth. Likewise, in regard to the rest of the heresies, it is necessary first to condemn however many false opinions about the faith they have. For, giving heed to these things, they accept the rest more eagerly.[86]

Griffith uses this text, and what he considers some evidence from one of the early suras of the Qur'an, called *al-Ma'idah*, or 'The Table', to argue that early Muslims disputed Monophysite theology upon entering Palestine and Syria and meeting Monophysites there. Griffith argues that the expression 'Mother of God', a key theological phrase of specifically Monophysite Christians, would have been immediately provocative to Muslims, who would have understood it to mean that Mary was a god.

Griffith pushes the case too far, and there are several problems with his interpretation of Anastasius' statement, any one of which makes it equally likely that Palestinian and Syrian Muslims of the seventh century were more concerned with the Christian application of the term 'god' to Jesus in addition to His Father in Heaven, rather than to Jesus in addition to his mother Mary. It is true that the Qur'an itself in several places rejects the idea that Mary is a god, but as often as it rejects Jesus and Mary as gods, it does so in the context of mandating against tri-theism, as in Sura 5:73–75:

> Unbelievers are those who say, 'God is the third of the three.' There is no god but One God. If they do not desist from what they are saying, the unbelievers amongst them will be touched by a painful torment. Will they not turn to God and seek His forgiveness? God is Forgiving and Merciful. The *Masih*, the son of Mary, was only a messenger, before whom [other] messengers had passed away, and his mother was an honest woman. Both used to eat the food [of this world]. See how We make the signs clear for them—then see how they are involved in lies.

The passage here is certainly concerned to show that Mary is not a god, but it does so taking for granted that part of the accusation includes not only Jesus and Mary, but also a third, unidentified person, usually considered to be God

86 Ibid., p. 348. The Greek text is found at Uthemann (ed.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Viae Dux*, p. 9.

himself in Qur'anic exegesis.[87] While I admit that Griffith's evidence regarding other passages found in the Qur'an suggest a focus on Jesus and Mary as two gods in opposition to the one supreme God, there is no reason to suppose that the ideas found in those passages held precedence over Muslim concern as found in passages similar to the one quoted here.[88]

Perhaps more of a concern, however, is that the Christian authors closest chronologically to Anastasius seem far more concerned to attribute to Muslims the belief that Christians held Jesus and His Father to be gods, as opposed to the belief that Jesus and Mary were gods. For example, consider John's defense to what he perceives are Muslim accusations of Associationism: "Καλοῦσι δὲ ἡμᾶς ἑταιριαστάς, ὅτι, φησίν, ἑταῖρον τῷ θεῷ παρεισάγομεν λέγοντες εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν θεοῦ καὶ θεόν." "Further, they call us Associators, because, they say, we introduce beside God an associate to Him when saying that Christ is the Son of God and God."[89] Likewise, the author of the treatise 'On the Triune Nature of God' repeats often the claim that Christ was god, and even quotes the Qur'an in an attempt to turn its accusation of Christian belief in two gods on its head: "Say not that we believe in two gods, or that we say there are two Lords. God Forbid! Verily God is one God and one Lord in His Word and His Spirit."[90] The passage here again shows concern for the idea of two gods, but is addressed to the question of Jesus and the supreme god, while Mary is left out. The treatise 'On the Triune Nature of God', which has its own ties to Sinai and which is fundamentally concerned with the issue of 'two gods', is without any concern that the intended 'second god', as it were, is Mary. Added to these we have the fact that Anastasius himself never mentions Mary, but only 'two gods'. It is thus only Griffith's interpretation of Anastasius' comments that place Qur'anic ideas and Mary in the context of the anti-Monophysite treatise Anastasius has composed.[91]

Anastasius thus shows no clear knowledge of Qur'anic passages, and Griffith's attempt to make it look as though he does is not sustainable on closer

---

87 In fact apparently the vast majority of Muslim commentators are of the view that the Qur'an refutes the Trinity, leaving Mary out of the picture all together. See K. Zebiri, 'Polemic and Polemical Language', McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. IV, p. 114.

88 Griffith adduces *Sura 5:116*, which he quotes, "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you tell people 'Take me and my mother for two gods instead of God?'"

89 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 63, ln. 61–62.

90 Gibson (ed.), *An Arabic Version of the Acts*, p. 16.

91 It should further be noted that Chalcedonian Orthodox Christians also adhere to the phrase, 'Mother of God' [θεοτόκος]. It is thus equally arguable, on the basis of this term alone, that Muslims were reacting to Chalcedonian theology, rather than to non-Chalcedonian, or Monophysite theology.

investigation. Griffith admits that Anastasius' references to Islam are only in passing, and that his principle concern is to combat the heresies of Monophysitism and Monothelitism. He writes, "It is only the modern reader, looking back over the works of Anastasius, with the Muslims and the teachings of the Qur'an in mind, who notices that references to them can be seen in what Anastasius says about the Arabs …".[92] Griffith's retrospective analysis, built on what he observes in the Qur'an, does appear to corroborate beliefs reflected in a few sparse statements of Anastasius. But he concludes that because of this, "… these ideas, and probably the Qur'an in which they were expressed, were well developed and widespread among the conquering Arabs by the second half of the seventh century."[93] This is speculation, and not supported by an examination of the evidence early Muslims seem to have had regarding Christianity. It can be used as evidence to support the formation and oral circulation of pre-Qur'anic ideas, but cannot be used to support the presence of the Qur'an itself.

Thus, the hypothesis that the Qur'an was in written form and available for study should not be based on the evidence that authors writing in Greek in the early period of Islam produced what appear to be portions of the Qur'an or Qur'anic ideas in their writings.[94] Qur'anic sayings probably circulated in different forms very early, without there being a consolidated canonical holy text until sometime later. We know that as early as 643 coins, papyri, building inscriptions, tombstones, and travelers graffiti feature expressions such as the *basmala* ('in the name of God'), and phrases commonly found in graffiti which appear in the Qur'an are first securely attested to in 683–84.[95] Anastasius of Sinai (d. c. 700), whose writings precede John's by thirty years, shows an awareness of certain 'Islamic' ideas found in the Qur'an, but this material need only be considered 'Qur'anic', without its being considered evidence for an early written Qur'an. Further, it cannot be demonstrated that Anastasius knew Arabic, nor is this very likely, given his position at Mt. Sinai. But let us now

92 Griffith, 'Anastasios of Sinai', p. 355.

93 Ibid., p. 356.

94 Ibid., pp. 356–58. Griffith and Richard worked under the mistaken impression that the first edition of the *Hodegos* of Anastasius must have been written prior to 681. But see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, pp. 92–103, for the argument that the work must have first appeared around 690. The years make all the difference at this early stage, as Abd al-Malik's building project of the Dome of the Rock, containing Qur'anic inscriptions which exhibit concern against the divinity of Jesus began in 691–92, and thus clear material evidence exists that at that time Muslim concerns over the divinity of Jesus, and not Mary, were the more prevalent.

95 Johns, 'Archaeology and the History of Early Islam'.

move forward to another Greek source which may shed further light on what kinds of knowledge eighth-century Byzantines had concerning Islam.

The Alleged Leo-ʿUmar Correspondence

Another text likely composed in Greek which may provide insight into some early Islamic practices is the so-called letter of Leo to ʿUmar, parts of which may date to the early eighth century.[96] There are now known two ancient documents relating to Leo's letter, the one purporting to be the letter written by the Emperor Leo III (717–741) in response to another purporting to be by the Caliph ʿUmar II (717–720).[97] The correspondence is supposed, and 'potentially Greek', because the original documents are lost.[98]

The tradition that a correspondence took place between the two is at least as early as the early ninth century because a short notice that ʿUmar wrote a doctrinal letter to Leo inviting him to convert to Islam appears in several historical chronicles. The material in these chronicles has been carefully analyzed, and is now thought to have been reproduced from a lost chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa (d. c. 785) or the 'Eastern Source', as found in the works of Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818), Dionysius of Tell-Mahre (d. 848), and Agapius the Bishop of Manbij (d. c. 941).[99] Theophanes is known to have

96 Umar's letter to Leo can be found in translation in Gaudeul, who claims to have discovered the original text of the correspondence. See J.-M. Gaudeul, 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar: 'Umar's Letter Rediscovered?' *Islamochristiana* 10, (1984), pp. 109–57, and A. Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence Between 'Umar II and Leo III', *HTR* 37 (1944), pp. 269–332, who presents Leo's letter to Umar. The authenticity of both texts have been questioned, but see R. Hoyland, 'The Correspondence between Leo III (714–41) and 'Umar II (717–20)', *Aram* 6 (1994), pp. 165–77, republished in Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, pp. 490–501 for some valuable suggestions regarding early dating.

97 The letters as we now have them are preserved in Armenian for Leo, and Arabic-Aljamiado for Umar. The bibliography for all manuscripts can be found in Hoyland's *Seeing Islam.* I have worked only with the translations of the Armenian text in Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence' and the Arabic-Aljamiado text found in Gaudeul, 'Umar's Letter Rediscovered?'.

98 See Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence' for an introduction to the problem, and Hoyland, 'The Correspondence between Leo III and 'Umar II', pp. 165–70. This will be discussed further below.

99 Mention of Umar's letter can be found at: De Boor (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 399; Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 550, and Vasiliev, 'Kitab al-'Unvan, histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj', *PO* 8.2.2 (1912), pp. 502–03. Chronicle 1234, which has been traditionally seen as representing Dionysius

composed his chronicle sometime around 813, so less than a century after the supposed correspondence had been written.[100] However, Theophilus (discussed above), on whom Theophanes is now considered to have been relying for his information on Islam, is thought to have died sometime between 780 and 785. If Theophanes was drawing on Theophilus as is currently thought, the date of reference should be pushed back to a *terminus ante quem* of 785 for the establishment of the tradition of an exchange of letters between the two.[101] Even if what we have now is not an actual correspondence between the two rulers, we may well have the work of two people writing in the early eighth century about Islam, and the information they detail can help us consider John's text.[102] The correspondence is important for containing material which does not appear in other Greek, Syriac, or Arabic sources, but some of which is common to John of Damascus' treatise. Although I discuss both letters below, my interest will be largely confined to Leo's letter. 'Umar's letter, apart from being written from the Muslim side, is clearly later enough in date to be less interesting or relevant to our own study.[103]

of Tell-Mahre's lost chronicle, has added material from the covenant of 'Umar, and thus may not be seen as a source for the above correspondence. Nonetheless, as Theophanes and Agapius both mention 'Umar's letter to Leo, it is to be assumed that this was found in the 'Eastern Source'. See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, pp. 631–76 for an attempt to reconstruct the content of the common source.

100 Theophanes dates the correspondence to the year 717/18. For details regarding the identity of the author of the material used in Theophanes' entries for this period, see Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. lxxxiii and Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad', pp. 317–41.

101 E. A. W. Budge (ed.), *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj, the son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus; Being the First Part of his Political History of the World* (2 vols.) (Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 127.

102 Gaudeul, citing Khoury, thinks it impossible that we should have anything from the rulers themselves. Gaudeul, "Umar's Letter Rediscovered?' p. 114 and Khoury, *Les Théologiens byzantins et l'Islam*, pp. 200–13. Hoyland is more cautious, but stops short of saying anything definitive, postulating that several letters may have been written in the eighth century, of which we have today two, or the amalgam of several. Hoyland, 'The Correspondence between Leo III and 'Umar II', pp. 169–70.

103 Hoyland allows for the possibility of a late eighth century dating of the original 'Umar letter, of which the letter we now have may contain later interpolations from the ninth century. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, p. 494. Apart from Hoyland's own observations, it could be added that the author of the 'Umar letter clearly has a very developed knowledge of Christianity and Christian history. Apart from regular (albeit sometime corrupted) quotations from the Bible, he knows that Christians do not prostrate themselves on Sundays or during the period after Lent (this comes from the canons of Nicaea

The authenticity of both letters in the form in which we have them has been questioned, but Hoyland has argued for supporting an early dating for at least some of the material found in them, even if not necessarily for the authorship itself.[104] Similarly, Gaudeul has formed a convincing argument that a large portion of 'Umar's letter' can be recovered.[105] The issue is complicated, not least because we are dealing with a manuscript tradition for the two letters which spans Armenian, Latin, Arabic, and Aljamiado, none of which is the original language in which we suppose Leo's letter to have been written, namely Greek. The full text of Leo's letter is preserved in the Armenian historical chronicle of Ghevond (c. eighth century), of which the earliest manuscript we have dates from 1308.[106] The text of 'Umar's letter is preserved partially in a sixteenth-century Aljamiado text, and partially in a late ninth/early tenth-century Arabic text.[107] Hoyland shows that although there are difficulties in accepting that what we now have are the exact texts of the original letters, there is reason to contend that what has come down to us is an amalgamation of several letters written either between the two leaders, or two persons living in the early eighth century.[108]

Hoyland's recapitulation of the earlier arguments against authenticity and his refutation of them are clear, and I will not repeat them here, except to focus on some of the positive evidence for supporting an early dating of Leo's letter. The 'Leo letter' contains iconophilic attitudes of the emperor, himself a founder of Iconoclasm, at least in its imperial enforcement. These would seem difficult to explain, if we posit a date for the whole of the treatise sometime after 730, the latest date by which Iconoclasm is certain to have been advanced

---

325), he is familiar with the veneration of relics and images, and he also mentions Basil and Chrysostom as authorities for Christians. Apart from anything else, the text deserves further study of what a ninth century Arab Muslim could know of the Christian faith living in Homs, where the letter was likely written. Gaudeul, "Umar's Letter Rediscovered?' pp. 149–50.

104 Hoyland, 'The Correspondence between Leo III and 'Umar II'.

105 Gaudeul, "Umar's Letter Rediscovered?' gives a full discussion.

106 Z. Arzoumanian (ed.), *History of Lewond, the Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians = Patmut'iwn ¡ewondeay meci vardapeti Hayoc'* (St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church, 1982), pp. 29–33.

107 Gaudeul, ''Umar's Letter Rediscovered?' and D. Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulman anonyme d'époque 'Abbaside contre les chrétiens', *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 34 (1966), pp. 1–34.

108 Hoyland, 'The Correspondence between Leo III and 'Umar II'.

by Leo.[109] One might easily ask whether a Christian forger writing in Greek in the late eighth/early ninth century could have been unaware of the iconoclastic policies of Leo, and this seems very unlikely given the wide awareness there was regarding the controversy. John of Damascus was clearly aware of the controversy in Palestine, far removed from the centre of the dispute in Constantinople.[110] His own writings on the issue circulated quickly, and he was known as one opposing the iconoclasts and Leo in particular as early as 754, so it would be hard to imagine that such knowledge of Leo's iconoclast leanings could have escaped the notice of a potential forger, and all the more so if we accept the eighth-century chronicler Ghevond's hand in including it in his chronicle.[111]

Meyendorff's argument that neither the iconoclasts nor the iconodules would likely be capable of writing so dispassionately about icons during the time of the controversy is persuasive.[112] At one point Leo writes, "As for pictures, we do not give them a like respect, not having received in Holy Scripture any commandment whatsoever in regard to this. Nevertheless, finding in the Old Testament that divine command which authorized Moses to have executed in the tabernacle the figures of the Cherubim, and animated by a sincere attachment for the disciples of the Lord, who burned with love for the Saviour Himself, we have always felt a desire to conserve their images, which have come down to us from their times as their living representation."[113] This passage, while giving not the slightest hint of a pre-existing controversy over the

109 For Theophanes' entry that Leo began his imperial campaign against icons in 726, see Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, pp. 559–61. For the discussion of the date of imperial action, and the possible forgery of the official destruction of the image above the Chalke gate, see M.-F. Auzépy, 'La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé, par Léon III: propagande ou réalité?' *Byz* 60 (1990), pp. 445–92.

110 As discussed earlier, John of Damascus wrote several treatises on Iconoclasm in circa 728, 730, and the early 740s. Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises*, p. 10. It has even been remarked by some that John appeared to know considerably more about Iconoclasm than he did of Islam, despite his obvious geographical proximity to the latter. L. W. Barnard, *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (Brill, 1974), p. 30 and Meyendorff, 'Byzantine View of Islam', p. 118.

111 There has been some debate about when Ghevond lived. Jeffrey clearly thought Ghevond wrote in the 12th–13th centuries but Mahé has shown that he wrote in the 8th, adding further veracity to the claim that Leo's letter dates from that period. See J.-P. Mahé, 'Le probleme de l'authenticité et de la valeur de la chronique de Lewond', in *L'Arménie et Byzance: Histoire et Culture* (Publications de la Sorbonne: Centre de recherches d'histoire et de civilisation byzantines, 1996), pp. 119–26.

112 Meyendorff, 'Byzantine View of Islam', pp. 125–27.

113 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', p. 322.

issue, defends icons passively, without the advanced theology later characteristic of John of Damascus or Theodore the Studite (759–826). It is dispassionate, and without strong language either in support of, or in opposition to, the veneration of icons.

There is also some evidence internal to the letter supporting an early dating, which, however, may have been forged. A small quotation from the text itself leads one to a date of composition coincident with Theophanes' own entry date. This is found when the author of Leo's letter writes, "According to your own people, it is a hundred years, more or less, since your religion appeared in the midst of a single nation speaking a single language."[114] Counting according to the Muslim calendar, this gives one a date of 718, which fits perfectly in the time during which Leo and ʿUmar were both ruling, and is when the author of the passage in Theophanes' Chronicle places the exchange.[115] Although this might be the work of a clever forger, the point can also add to the collection of evidence that some of the material dates from a time before the Iconoclast controversy erupted, and before Leo published his edicts against Icons in 726 or 730. But how much of the material in Ghevond's letter can be considered authentic is problematic and there are arguments against assigning all of the material to this period.[116] However, some arguments which appear in the Damascene's text and are not found elsewhere could help both to authenticate sections of Ghevond's text, as well as support our claim that the Damascene was better informed than has been previously thought regarding certain Islamic beliefs.

To begin with, there seems to be no reason to suggest a dependence of the 'Leo' letter on John's work, or vice versa, for their respective information on

114 Ibid., p. 295.

115 The Muslim era starts in 622 CE, to which one cannot simply add 100 to reach the common era, as the Muslim year is lunar based, and therefore more or less 11 days shorter. Interestingly, both Theophilus and the Leo Letter attribute to the Muslims the belief in three rivers in paradise, of wine, honey, and milk. This is interesting because it may further lend support to an early dating in that the three listed are at variance with John of Damascus, Agapius, and Theodore Abu Qurrah (cf. the following chapter on Islamic traditions). Could Theophilus have drawn on the Leo letter for his information, or vice versa? Such a question would be difficult to answer given the sparse details found regarding Islam in the Chronicle.

116 Hoyland makes the case: Hoyland, 'The Correspondence between Leo III and ʿUmar II'. Difficulty comes from a variety of points, one of which being that the text also includes the comment that "it is now eight hundred years since Jesus Christ appeared, and His Gospel has been spread from one end of the earth to the other, amongst all peoples and all languages …". See Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence' p. 296.

Islam. There is sufficiently different material in both to be persuaded that neither drew on the other directly. Leo's letter to ʿUmar is substantially longer, albeit perhaps some of it interpolated with later material. There does not appear to be any direct quotation of Leo's work in that of John's, or conversely. Further, Leo's letter does not mention the story of the camel which we shall shortly consider, and which was so important for John. Finally, in contrast to John, Leo is far more concerned with what Muslims and ʿUmar say than he is with what either Muhammad or the Qur'an says, as appears to be the focus with John.

As for the Qur'an, Leo is not particularly interested in it, and perhaps this is another point in support of an early dating.[117] Indeed it could be said that Leo presents an Islam in which the Christian Scriptures are nearly as important as the Qur'an, and are the reference point around which debate takes place, rather than on the terms of alternative or opposing books of revelation. Throughout the letter Leo defends his own Scriptures and attacks ʿUmar for using the Bible to promote the Islamic faith or to attack the Christian one. He mentions the Qur'an at most once, and only to point out briefly that it is the product of human rather than divine hands. By contrast, he cites Christian Scripture passages repeatedly as if they hold authority for ʿUmar.[118] He accuses ʿUmar of using the Christian Scriptures selectively, instead of accepting them as a whole, and of distorting the actual Scriptures themselves.[119] Leo even goes so far as to provide his reader with a whole history of salvation, beginning with Moses, continuing through the prophets, and ending with Christ.[120] In contrast to later Christians, Leo is nowhere found using the Qur'an to witness for Christianity. If it were not for the occasional reference to paganism or heresy, one might think the whole debate were taking place within the framework of the Christian Church, and between competing Christian communities. If one were to speculate widely, it could be argued that Leo's testimony to Islam fits neatly chronologically in between Anastasius' and John's, as Anastasius seems aware of only a few Qur'anic phrases, and John may appear to be acquainted with the Islamic holy book.

117 Leo mentions the Qur'an once in passing in the course of the 50 printed pages in Jeffrey's translation, and then by the name *Furqan*. Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', p. 292.

118 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', pp. 283, 85, 91, 94, 300, 07, 11–14, and *passim*.

119 Ibid., pp. 283–85, 90–94, 300–01, and in general throughout the text. For the view that ʿUmar has distorted the Scriptures, see p. 283.

120 Ibid., pp. 303–09.

As regards similarities between John's work and the letter, there are several items that require attention. The first is a focus on witnesses, to which Leo returns on two occasions, and on which John also dwells at some length.[121] Leo similarly calls attention to the fact that the Qur'an apparently considers Miriam, the sister of Aaron, to be the mother of Jesus.[122] Muhammad is also presented very much as a legislator, a term used regularly in the correspondence when referring to him. Something similar appears in John of Damascus' text, especially at the end where John cites Muhammad's prohibition against wine and baptism, and against keeping the Sabbath, while modifying dietary laws.[123] The issues of baptism and Sabbath also appear in both works as important points of divergence between Christians and Muslims.[124]

More notable, however, are the similarities found in the story regarding Zaid and Zainab, as well as the practices revolving around the Kaʿba at Mecca. In both works Muslims are criticized for holding divorce laws that John and the author of the Leo letter say were created by Muhammad because of his desire to marry another man's wife. John of Damascus names the man Zaid, and the author of the Leo letter names the woman Zainab, both of whom are found in the Islamic sources as the correct identification of the married couple affected by Muhammad's divine revelations. Our authors claim that Muhammad invented a divine revelation to marry Zainab, and forced Zaid to divorce her for this reason, even though this aspect of the story does not appear in the Qur'an as such. Instead the earliest Muslim exegetes of the Qur'anic passage in which Zaid features sought to alleviate concerns that Muhammad had violated pre-Islamic custom by marrying the wife of an adopted son.[125] It is thus an interesting concurrence between John's work and that of the Leo letter, as neither emphasizes this violation of custom, nor seems aware of its potentially

121 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', p. 285 and 309. It is certainly true that the issue of witnesses would become a common theme among Christians criticizing Islam. See A.-T. Khoury, *Polemique Byzantine Contre L'Islam* (*VIIIe–XIIIe S.*) (Brill, 1972). The presence of the issue here cannot thus be used as evidence guaranteeing an early dating, but only as indicating a similarity with John's own work.

122 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', p. 309. This was a claim made by Christians later than these two texts as well, although apparently refuted among the earliest Islamic exegetes. See S. A. Mourad, 'Mary in the Qur'an: A Reexamination of Her Presentation', in G. S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 163–74.

123 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 67, ln. 153–56.

124 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', pp. 316–17.

125 See also the more recent biography by Lings, concerned to show the same: M. Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Revised edn., Islamic Texts Society, 1991), pp. 212–14.

scandalous nature for contemporary Muslims, while instead focusing on a detail of apparently little concern in the Muslim community, and not strictly speaking Qur'anic. Emphasizing the nature of marriage in Islam, both criticize Muhammad for comparing sexual intercourse with tilling the fields, and the barbarity of a new marriage law that requires a woman who was divorced from her husband to first engage in sexual relations with a new husband, before returning to the first husband.[126] As regards the Kaʿba, there is perhaps less to say, in that not as great a congruence of ideas held about it appear in John's work and the Leo letter. But it is noteworthy that both focus on the Black Stone itself at the Kaʿba as a place of pilgrimage. Leo mentions the stone by one of its Arabic names '*rukn*', while John simply says the Muslims call it 'stone' (*lithos*), and describes it and its pre-Islamic use as a locus of pagan worship.[127]

Perhaps most interesting, however, is the presence of the claim in the Leo letter that Muslims practice female circumcision, and that this practice appears to have originated with the religion of ʿUmar.[128] Hoyland has suggested that the presence of circumcision in Leo's letter lends credence to the view that it dates from an early period, which it certainly does, but he misses the fact that Leo's letter refers specifically to *female* circumcision, while the two Syriac texts to which he compares the letter only mention circumcision in general.[129] John of Damascus, however, also specifically mentions female circumcision as something prescribed only with the coming of Islam, and in fact by Muhammad himself. These two texts are the only ones I am aware of to do so, and this would seem to add a significant point in favor both of an early dating for the Leo letter, and that John's idea was not a product of his own creation. As the issue of female circumcision does not appear in later Byzantine works on Islam, it would seem that we are likely dealing with an early tradition which was later deemed mistaken, as knowledge of the Qur'an and its contents later circulated, and it became clear circumcision does not appear in it.[130] Yet for our case it is valuable evidence that the idea held further currency than

126 The passage from John of Damascus is above, while that of Leo is found in Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', pp. 325–26. The comparison of sexual intercourse to tilling fields is made in the Qur'an at Sura 2:223, while the divorce law to which our authors refer is found in Sura 2:227–232.

127 I will elaborate on the traditions surrounding the Black Stone at the Kaʿba in the following chapter on Islamic and para-Islamic traditions.

128 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', p. 317.

129 Hoyland, 'The Correspondence between Leo III and ʿUmar II', p. 176.

130 There is no mention of circumcision in the Qur'an. For more on the specific issue of female circumcision in Islam and John's attribution of the institution of the practice to Muhammad, see the next chapter.

with just John himself, and as I shall show in the next chapter, could also be found in early Islamic tradition and its sources.

Leo's letter suggests that some of John's ideas about Islam in the mid-eighth century could be independently corroborated as ideas from that time period, whether or not those beliefs were actually held by Muslims at that time. The independent verification of such attitudes toward witnesses, the Sabbath, Baptism, the Kaʿba, and especially the story regarding Zaid and marriage laws and female circumcision, permits one to speculate that there were sources for such views, and they were not simply the product of Byzantine Christians inventing slanderous beliefs designed to suit polemical purposes. There is no doubt that false ideas circulated about Islam in the Byzantine world and the two authors may have picked up on some of them independently, but it is also possible that John and the author of Leo's letter are rather witnessing to Islamic ideas and practices in the eighth century, about which more is said in the following chapter. But before that, let us turn now to consider John of Damascus and the use he may have made of alternative sources for information regarding Islam.

Lives of the Prophets and Other Sources

As the reader will no doubt be aware, stories of a great many prophets circulated in the Middle East throughout antiquity. Many such stories found their way into canonical collections such as the Septuagint, while others have continued to circulate primarily in oral tradition right up to the present day. Not surprisingly, collections of stories of prophets often overlap with other faith traditions, and the same prophet (Abraham, for example) may appear in collections utilized by very different faith communities, often in entirely different stories and contexts. In the Islamic tradition, such lives or stories appear in *ḥadīth, tafsīr*, and universal histories such as that of al-Tabari (838–923), and were not organized in a collection until the eleventh century at the earliest. Al-Tha`alabi (d. 1035), about whom very little is known, is our earliest extant source.[131] In the Qur'an, approximately 18 different prophets can be found in different verses, many of these being familiar to the Judeo-Christian tradition. While the Qur'an certainly contains a multitude of references to different prophets, it is generally recognized that the author of the Qur'an expected a

131 W. M. Brinner (ed.), *'Arā'is Al-Majālis Fī Qisas Al-Anbiyā'* or "Lives of the Prophets" as recounted by Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Tha'labī (Brill, 2002).

high degree of familiarity with the stories that the Qur'an refers to, and the text does not provide continuous narratives of such stories.[132]

A few prophets found in the Qur'an, along with their accompanying lives and stories, cannot be found in Jewish or Christian literature, and one of these plays a prominent role in John of Damascus' treatise on Islam. The story of Salih and the 'Camel of God' which is found in John of Damascus' work and might have been thought by John to be part of the Qur'an itself, has caused scholars some difficulty and disagreement when attempting to assess its significance and place in John's work, and has been used to argue that either John was not familiar with the Qur'an, or that he was.[133] The story is quite important, both because John draws heavily on it in his treatise (it takes up nearly one-third of the whole treatise), and because it provides good reason to think John may have drawn on sources other than the Qur'an for his information regarding Islam.[134] Even though a version of the story appears in the Qur'an, for our purposes here it will be referred to as 'extra-Qur'anic', for reasons which will be apparent shortly.

The interpretive obstacles of the story begin when John writes, "Πάλιν γραφὴ τῆς καμήλου τοῦ θεοῦ" ("Again, there is the writing (γραφὴ) of the 'Camel of God'").[135] The text may be read to understand that John is referring to a Scripture of Muhammad's, but could also be interpreted as a piece of writing, or Holy Word. Of course both of the opposing views of John of Damascus and his knowledge of Islam were formed, as I have pointed out earlier, under the assumption the Qur'an was already well established in the Islamic tradition, and held canonical authority. Leaving aside such prejudices, alternative conclusions present themselves.

Here again we can reap the benefit of recent work done into the myths and legends of the people of the Thamud, around whom the camel story revolves, and what influence the legend has had on the Islamic tradition.[136] The pre-Islamic people of the Thamud lived in the northern Hijaz, in an area

132 See A. Neuwirth, 'Myths and Legends in the Qur'an', in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 3, pp. 477 and Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*.

133 Merrill uses the text to argue that John must not have known the Qur'an, since he includes among the canon of scripture a text which clearly is not. Merrill, 'John of Damascus on Islam', p. 98. Sahas, on the other hand, attempts to use the story to argue for knowledge of the Qur'an on the basis that much of the story with which John is familiar has corollaries in the Qur'an. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 91–95.

134 Incidentally, John's account should be of particular value to Islamic scholars, as it surely represents one of the earliest versions we have of the story.

135 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 65, ln. 114.

136 For bibliography see J. Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough: Reconstructing Arabian Myth* (Indiana University Press, 1996).

known as Meda'in Salih in Arab legend, or the 'Cities of Salih', approximately 50 miles southwest of Tayma. They lived from about the fourth century BC, to the first half of the seventh century AD, at which time Arabian legends, beginning with the Qur'an, have it that the prophet Salih appeared to them. The pre-Islamic prophet is said to have warned them to repent and believe in one god, which they did not do, and were consequently destroyed. The basic elements of the story are found in both the Qur'an and *tafsīr*, but not all of the material found in the different bodies of literature coincides. Additionally, some elements of the legend are found in John of Damascus' text, and appear to have no parallel in the Qur'an.

The legend, or legends, as they are found in the Qur'an are dispersed throughout it, making reference to the Thamud in 21 suras, and mentioning the prophet Salih nine times. Moreover, summarizing the story of the camel using the Qur'an poses a challenge since there appears to be some divergence in the details as found in at least one of the 21 Suras that contain elements of the legend, and so would require adhering to one or another version found there.[137] According to one version of the story found in the Qur'an, which is admittedly somewhat disjointed, Salih was sent to the people of Thamud to admonish them and lead them back from the worship of their stone idols to the worship of the one god, Allah.[138] Salih's people acknowledge him as a prophet, but refuse to abandon their pagan ways, and demand a sign of Salih. Salih produces a she-camel of God, and commands that she be allowed to drink of their water source and not be harmed. The Thamud instead wound the camel, and as a result are destroyed by God, except for Salih and a few of the righteous. Such are the main elements of the story as found in the Qur'an.[139]

John of Damascus, however, has his own version of the narrative, the English translation of which I quote here in full:

> Again, there is the writing of 'The Camel of God', about which he says that there was a camel from God and that she used to drink the whole

137 Most suras refer to the Thamud only in passing. Four passages contain extended fragments which include more than three verses of text. These are found at Sura 7:73–79, 8:61–68, 18:141–158, and 10:23–32. Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough*, p. 15. For the divergence, see Rippin, who wrote, "Finally, it should be noted that the version in Q 27:45–53 differs almost completely from that given in the other passages, excluding details such as the she-camel, or a description of the type of event that caused the destruction of their [the Thamud's] houses." A. Rippin, 'Salih', in *EI*^{2} vol. 8, p. 984.

138 Sura 7:73–74.

139 See also Firestone's entry for the 'Thamūd' in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 5, p. 252–54.

river and could not pass between two mountains because there was not enough room for her. There were people in that place, he says, and on one day they were drinking the water and the camel on the next. Having drunk the water she supplied them offering milk instead of the water. Those men rose up, he says, and being evil they killed the camel; but there was, however, a small camel born of her, which, he says, cried to God when its mother died, and He took her up to Himself. And we say to them: "Where was that camel from?" And they respond, "from God". And we say, "Was there another camel coupled with her?" And they say, "No". "How then" we say, "did she give birth? For we see that your camel was fatherless, motherless and without genealogy, but having given birth she suffered evil. In your story there appears neither the one who coupled with the she-camel, nor (how) the young camel was taken up. Why did your prophet therefore, to whom, according to what you say, God has spoken, not find out about the camel, where she grazes, who milks her, and who drinks her milk? Or did she also, at some time, like her mother, fall into the hands of evil men and was killed, or did she enter into paradise before you, she from whom the river of milk flows that you so foolishly speak about? For you say that three rivers will flow for you in paradise; of water, wine and milk. If your forerunner camel is outside of paradise, it is clear that she has died out of hunger and thirst, or that others are enjoying her milk, and your prophet is boasting in vain as though he talked with God; for the mystery of the camel was not revealed to him. But if she is in paradise, she is again drinking the water and, without water, you will be parched in the midst of the delights of paradise. And if you will desire wine from the nearby flowing river, when there is no water present—for the camel drank it all—drinking of it undiluted you will burn, and you will stumble from drunkenness, and fall asleep; and heavy headed, both after sleep, and being drunk from the wine, you will miss the pleasures of paradise. How, then, did your prophet not think of these things, neither that they might happen to you in the paradise of delight nor did he consider where the camel is now? But neither did you ask him yourself about the three rivers he spoke about from his dreams. But we assure you that surely your wonderful camel has already entered into the souls of asses, leading the way where you also are going to go, like animals. And there is the outer darkness and everlasting hell; a roaring fire, an ever wakeful worm, and demons of hell".[140]

140 Greek text found at Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, pp. 65–66, ln. 114–148.

There are a number of elements in John's version of the story that do not appear in the Qur'an, and it is unclear whether John realizes that the subject of the story is Muhammad, another figure, or perhaps has no protagonist, as John does not name the main characters in the story. But given the place Muhammad has in the rest of the text, one might easily make the presumption that John is writing under the misunderstanding that Muhammad is the subject. At one point he asks his interlocutors why Muhammad did not learn more details regarding the camel and its offspring, and he mocks the Ishmaelites for suggesting that Muhammad could be in conversation with God and be ignorant of certain details about the camel. Additionally, the offspring of the she-camel does not feature in the Qur'an, and its presence in John's narrative makes any claim that his story derived from the canonical text of the Qur'an absurd.

However, if we look to other sources, the story of the she-camel and her offspring does emerge. Interestingly, a version of the story also appears in the poetry of Umayya ibn Abi al-Salt, a contemporary of the Prophet, and this has not gone unnoticed by Islamicists. Huart was the first scholar to call attention to the presence of the story in Umayya's poetry, and used it to argue that Umayya's poetry was a potential source for the Qur'an.[141] He was apparently unaware that a similar version to Umayya's appears in John of Damascus' treatise. Huart was uncritical in accepting the authenticity of the whole of Ummaya's poetry, and he was subsequently attacked on that basis. But whether Umayya's poetry itself is authentic is less important to us than if the stories he recounts derive from the pre-Islamic milieu and circulated independently of the Qur'an. Authenticating his poetry would prove such was the case, but if his poetry is shown to date from a later period it would still be possible that the she-camel story circulated contemporaneously with Muhammad.

Although Umayya's poetry has yet to be fully studied, Seidensticker has recently argued for the authenticity of some of the poetry ascribed to him.[142] Of the extant corpus of 900 lines attributed to him, two scholars have argued for the authenticity of up to 225 lines, while the rest they consider later forgeries likely made by Qur'anic exegetes.[143] Seidensticker himself suggests that more research needs to be undertaken before clear solutions can be presented, even

141 C. Huart, 'Une nouvelle source du Qoran', *JA* 10.4 (1904), pp. 125–67.

142 T. Seidensticker, 'The Autheticity of the Poems ascribed to Umayya Ibn Abī al-Salt', in J. R. Smart (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature* (Curzon, 1996), pp. 87–101.

143 Ibid., p. 96, citing Frank-Kamenetzky, *Untersuchungen über das Verhältnis der dem Umajja b. Abi ṣ Salt zugeschriebenen Gedichte zum Qoran*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Konigsberg: Kirchhain N. L. (1911).

as regards the whole of the corpus. What makes Umayya ibn Abi al-Salt so significant for this study is that some features of his version of the story have important parallels to John's version.[144] For example, there is the young of the she-camel which cries out to God, common to both stories and later Islamic tradition, but not found in the Qur'an.[145] It is described as being either taken up to Heaven, or responsible for eliciting God's destruction of the Thamud.[146] It further appears that the name of the prophet as found in the Qur'an, Salih, is likewise unspecified in the poetry of Umayya and the Damascene's *Heresy 100*, a fact of greater significance than might first be perceived.

To date, no one has discovered clear evidence proving that the name of the prophet of the story, 'Salih' dates from the pre-Islamic period. To the contrary, Rippin observes that the name was very rare and generic, and he suggests that it comes from Muhammad's time, with the consonant sequence s-l-h meaning 'righteous', or 'pious one'.[147] He further notes that although perhaps the name was not completely unknown before Muhammad, it certainly never appeared among the Nabataean, Palmyrene or Hatran.[148] Stetkevych confirms this in his study of the name, and goes further, by observing that the name was unique among all the biblical and pre-Islamic prophets as qualitatively epithetic, meaning 'virtuous', 'incorrupt one', or 'righteous'. This allowed future Muslim story-tellers to treat Salih as a 'figura' of the prophet, not the least of which involved referring to Salih as a merchant, something Muhammad himself was said to have been.[149] This in turn led Stetkevych to argue that a certain 'symbolic identity' developed between the two prophets.

Given the congruence of the details above between John of Damascus' version and that of Umayya's, one cannot help but be eager to know the result of future research into the authenticity of Umayya's poetry, but a natural argument presents itself as a case for at least partial authenticity.[150] As the Qur'an

144 For what follows, regarding the story of the she-camel in Umayya, I rely heavily on Huart's findings. C. Huart (ed.), *Le Livre de la Création et de l'Histoire* 6 vols. (Leroux, 1899–1916) vol. 3, pp. 42–43, and Huart, 'Une nouvelle source du Qoran', pp. 150–60.

145 For different versions of the story, see Brinner (ed.), *"Lives of the Prophets"*, pp. 114–23, and W. M. Thackston (ed.), *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisa'i* (Twayne Publishers, 1978), pp. 117–28.

146 In John's text the camel cries out to God, and is taken up to Heaven. In Umayya's text, the camel cries out to God for the destruction of the Thamud.

147 A. Rippin, 'Salih', *EI*^{2} vol. 8, p. 984.

148 Ibid.

149 Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough*, pp. 64 and 123–24, note 15.

150 Unfortunately Stetkevych, writing at the same time as Seidensticker, seems unaware of his article on al-Salt, and attributes the origin of the legend of the downfall of the Thamud

came to hold a central place for Muslims in Islamic tradition, it would seem *a priori* unlikely that major details of the camel story, such as the presence of the she-camel's young, would be purely a product of later Islamic fabrication, in such a way as to be at variance with those details found in the Qur'an. There is no difficulty in understanding, on the other hand, how later exegetes might embellish the story of the camel in some of its details. But as regards the main characters of the story, it seems less likely for these to be newly created, and more likely for later exegetes to understand Muhammad to be using part of a well-known story of his time, the details of which those in Muhammad's community were well aware.[151] While it is certainly possible that the young of the she-camel is simply a post-Qur'anic invention, the temptation to attribute it to a well-known folk story of his time is great.

Based on the later Islamic tradition, Stetkevych has attempted to reconstruct the pre-Islamic myth of the prophet and the Thamud, and to show in what ways the story has been used in the *sīra* literature to link the narrative to Muhammad himself.[152] Given the etymology of the name Salih, he further finds that a certain 'symbolic identity' in Islamic literature has taken place between Muhammad, Salih, and the slayer of the she-camel, Qudar, and that the story acquired a degree of historicity in exegetical works of the Qur'an, regardless of how it was previously received, whether deviating or not from the version enshrined in the Qur'an.[153] He shows that the two key accounts of our story in the later Islamic narratives are more extensive than that found in the Qur'an, and clearly attempt to explain historical conditions in the pre-Islamic period. Specificially, Stetkevych argues that three main objectifying factors in the narratives—the appearance of the she-camel, the primary right to the source of water, and the right to seasonal pasture grounds—all contribute

to the Qur'an in his own study, although he certainly admits that it may have a prehistory in the "pure oral lore" prior to the coming of Islam. Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough*, p. 16.

151 The idea that the stories drawn on in the Qur'an were well-known to the early hearers of the Revelation is one which has gained increasing currency in modern Islamic scholarship. The older idea, that the stories were mainly simple borrowings from Jewish and Christian tradition integrated into the emerging Islamic one is no longer held. See A. Neuwirth, 'Myths and Legends in the Qur'an', in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 3, p. 477.

152 Stekevych's attempt to reconstruct the story of Salih, the She-camel, and the people of the Thamud utilized several sources, the most important of which are *ḥadīth*, al-Tabari's (d. 923) commentary on the Qur'an, the Qur'an itself, and several collections of Tales of the Prophets composed by later authors. See Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough*, p. 13 for references.

153 Ibid., pp. 57 and 106–12.

to the view that the Islamic narratives were attempting to explain aspects of pre-Islamic society, and thus the mythic qualities of the story were put aside.[154] Stetkevych's observations allow one to advance the theory that exegetes may have identified the two as one historical figure, i.e. the prophet Muhammad, while the term 'Salih' was used as an alternative term for the prophet given its etymology.

Further, although the Thamud appear to have a documented history as a people, and although it appears that their extinction is described in the Qur'an, it may equally be suggested that they serve simply as a symbol of any of the lost pre-Islamic tribes enacting human rebellion which subsequently incurred the wrath of God. Substantiation for this comes from the fact that the story is spread out in the Qur'an and used in varying places with alternative details, as well as from the fact that the suras in which we find the story come almost entirely from the so called 'Meccan' period, in which the literature composed had a more symbolic character.[155] If this is so, and the story took on a more fictional literary character for didactic purposes as opposed to a strictly historical narrative, than it releases anyone using the story from the constraint of a more strict repetition of historical facts.

We have, therefore, a story likely embellished and potentially variously interpreted, whose origination probably dates from the time of the prophet Muhammad, the protagonist of which has a name with no pre-Islamic antecedent and who was subsequently used in the Islamic tradition as a literary type of the Prophet himself. It would seem, therefore, that if this story circulated, whether in a version of the Qur'an or not, the figures of Salih and Muhammad were sometimes conflated. It would not be surprising, then, given the story's literary quality in the Qur'an, if alternative extra-canonical versions circulated amongst Muslims, as they would do a few generations later, or if some of these extra-canonical stories contained elements which were held to be as historically valid or even canonical as those found in the Qur'an itself.

Additionally, the Damascene refers specifically to the 'She-camel of God' (καμήλου τοῦ θεου) (*naqat Allah*), and not the 'She-camel of Salih', a change

154 Ibid.

155 Firestone comments that the Thamud are often depicted in the Qur'an side by side with the *Ad*, another tribe fitting the literary trope. See R. Firestone, 'Thamud', in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 5, p. 252. Stetkevych makes a similar observation, supporting the use of the Thamud as a literary device, and observing that nearly all of the material on the Thamud found in the Qur'an are products of the Meccan period, which yielded "much more strongly mythopoeically swayed inspiration". Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough*, p. 15.

Stetkevych noted was a hermeneutical adjustment sometimes made by later Qur'anic commentators.[156] While not referring to Salih might implicate John for identifying the story with Muhammad, it may alternatively suggest that he was drawing on early sources for his information about the story, and did not alter the text to reflect a version which treated the two prophets as one figure. It may also suggest that John knew of the tradition as referring to Salih, and like later Muslim exegetes, understood the term to be referring to Muhammad, whether symbolically or not.

The spectrum of scholarship on the story of the she-camel is clearly wide enough to encompass John of Damascus' version without the need to explain the variance between his version of the story and that found in the Qur'an by positing John's ignorance of early Islam or his deliberate distortion of it. If John was using a version of the Qur'an, the fact that several elements of his story do not appear there can be understood in light of the fact that the story carried a certain mythical quality, was spread out throughout the Qur'an, and could easily have circulated in other versions plausibly perceived as part of the emerging canon of Islamic belief.[157] Further, the fact that Muhammad may appear as the subject of the story can be explained by virtue of there having been achieved a certain identity between Muhammad and Salih in the emerging Islamic tradition, to which it seems later exegetes would attach greater historical value. It may even be that a pre-Islamic version circulated in which Muhammad was not the subject, and which contained some elements of the story that were not included in the Qur'an, but were in John of Damascus' description. There is thus no reason why the presence of the she-camel story in our text should be determinate in establishing whether or not John of Damascus used the Qur'an as a source for his information regarding Islam. Despite his use of the usually scriptural terminology of *graphe*, it further seems plausible that John of Damascus was not using the Qur'an as his single, or necessarily even primary, source of information regarding early Islam. If we accept a part of the emerging 'revisionist' hypothesis regarding early Islamic origins, John's alternative collection of what might be termed 'extra-Qur'anic' material would hardly seem surprising. But before drawing any firm conclusions, it behoves us to consider several other issues which arise in John's text with reference to Islamic and para-Islamic traditions, to which we now turn.

156 Ibid., p. 15.

157 Of course given some of the more radical revisionist opinions, there may be no need to come to such defense, if the Qur'an had not been canonized by John's time.

CHAPTER 4

Islamic and Para-Islamic Traditions

As we have seen, some of the traditions mentioned by John of Damascus in his treatise on Islam have been used by scholars to criticize John in arguments on the grounds that John had little accurate knowledge about Islam. In this chapter we will consider several more of these traditions separately, considering what John has to say about each, and situating those statements in their proper historical and religious context. While at first glance the Damascene may appear to be mistaken in what he records as coming from the Islamic tradition[1] evidence is lacking to conclude John was necessarily wrong in his perceptions of Islamic traditions, and it is equally plausible that he was familiar with features of what we now recognize to be a part of pre-classical Islam.

Each tradition is dealt with separately, as attempting to catalogue the traditions according to categories such as 'pre-Islamic and Islamic', or 'Qur'anic' and non-Qur'anic', leads one only into confusion. Are rituals practiced at the Kaʿba 'Qur'anic' or 'pre-Qur'anic'? Is female circumcision an 'Islamic tradition', or a 'pre-Islamic' one which today only some consider 'Islamic'? Is the tradition that a Christian monk taught Muhammad about God an 'Islamic' or 'non-Islamic' one, given that the tradition can be found in both Christian and Muslim sources, but is absent from the Qur'an? The answer to none of these questions is straightforward, and for this reason I have entitled the chapter 'Islamic and Para-Islamic Traditions', adding the necessary clarifying markers for the reader who wishes to know if such traditions are found in the Qur'an, *ḥadīth, sīra, tafsīr*, a non-Islamic tradition, etc. As we have already seen, there are other traditions John mentions which could similarly be dwelt upon, such as that involving Zaid or the she-camel of God, but space precludes an examination of all of them here.

Major developments within the field of early Islamic Studies have taken place within the last 35 years, and there has been virtually no attempt to place

1 The expression 'Islamic tradition' (or traditions) will be taken, as it is regularly in contemporary scholarship, to refer to the mass of traditional Muslim literature, including the life of the Prophet (*sīra*), commentaries on the Qur'an (*tafsīr*), and collections of sayings of the Prophet (*ḥadīth*). These come to us from sources which first appear in the late eighth or ninth century at the earliest. For my purposes here I will refer in the main to secondary literature which summarizes some of the 'traditional' beliefs and sayings.

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_006

John's analysis of Islam in the light of those developments.[2] Before analyzing John's work and how he reports on various early Islamic and Para-Islamic traditions, it is necessary to engage briefly with how Islamicists are currently investigating such traditions.

Scholarly Accounts of Early Islam

Extant literary sources contemporary to the formation of Islam are few, and this paucity has made study of the early faith difficult.[3] Attempts have been made to reconstruct the earliest documents relating to the Muslim community, such as the 'Constitution of Medina', from the relatively late Islamic sources, and while most scholars are in agreement over the authenticity of most of the material in that 'document', it is nonetheless a short text, and difficult to use, as identification of the parties involved is not easy.[4] The Prophet and founder of the faith, Muhammad, died in 632 AD, but in the century following his death almost no historical writing was carried out in the regions in which Islam grew.[5] Literature coming from within the Islamic tradition about the faith from the time of the birth of Islam up to the mid eighth century is sparse, apart from the Qur'an.[6] The Qur'an, however, provides the historian little help, as it is not an historical chronicle, and its early first-century (AH) origins have rightly been

2 Andrew Louth has alluded to these in his book on John. See Louth, *St. John Damascene*, p. 80. Le Coz, whose book on John appeared in the series *Source Chretiennes*, is an example of one who has made no attempt to engage with the modern scholarship on early Islam. See R. Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam: Presentation with Introduction, Translation, and Commentaries* (Les Editions Du Cerf, 1992).

3 For a summary of the historiographical problems in the Islamic tradition see A. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, ed. L. I. Conrad, trans. M. Bonner (Darwin Press, 1994), pp. 1–25 and F. M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Origins* (Darwin Press, 1998), pp. 1–31.

4 For the most recent attempt at a critical edition, see M. Lecker, *The "Constitution of Medina": Muhammad's First Legal Document* (Darwin Press Inc., 2004). For a review which sees some of Lecker's attempts at identifying the parties to the Constitution as fruitless, see R. Senturk, 'The 'Constitution of Medina': Muhammad's First Legal Document by Michael Lecker', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 19.2 (2008), pp. 251–53.

5 The growth of Islam prior to the conquests in the mid 630s took place largely in Arabia. Following the conquests, and up until the 730s Islam spread to Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. For a summary account of this growth, see F. M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton University Press, 1981).

6 G. Schoeler, 'Schreiben und Veroffentlichen: Zu Verwendung und Funktion der Schrift in den ersten islamischen Jahrhunderten', *Der Islam* 69 (1992), pp. 1–43. Partially translated as

called into question.[7] Literature coming from Byzantine sources is not much more plentiful, and as we have seen, there was a drop in interest in historical affairs, particularly in the Greek-speaking world.[8] Syriac historical writing in the seventh century fared somewhat better, but a great deal of it has been lost, and we are reliant primarily on chroniclers writing a century later, usually with respect to specifically ecclesiastical issues.[9] Armenian historical sources are similarly limited, notwithstanding the mid seventh-century *Armenian History* attributed to Sebeos, which provides some chronology of events contemporary to the conquests.[10] Overall, however, historians are agreed that a precise historical record for the time of the conquests is quite difficult to establish from the literary traditions active at the place and time Islam was born.[11] This difficulty has forced the historian to consider later evidence purporting to reflect the historical conditions at the time of Islam's formation.

The Islamic tradition's account of the faith's origins is one which accepts Islamic sources (nearly all of which date from at least a century after the prophet's death) as essential for determining what happened in the early Islamic period. These sources consist of: the Qur'an as the primary literary and

---

G. Schoeler, 'Writing and Publishing: On the Use and Function of Writing in the First Centuries of Islam', *Arabica* 44 (1997), pp. 423–35.

7 Muhammad died in 632 AD. The traditional Islamic account of the Qur'an is that the *suras* were collected, edited, and codified in a single volume during the reign of the caliph Uthman (644–656 AD). But see I. Warraq (ed.), *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book* (Prometheus Books, 1998) and collected articles for a sampling of some who think that the Qur'an could not have been codified until sometime in the early to mid-eighth century. Wansbrough goes even further, suggesting a date as late as the mid ninth century, although he is certainly an outlier.

8 M. Whitby, 'Greek Historical Writing after Procopius'.

9 S. Brock, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1976), pp. 17–36, S. Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing: a Survey of the Main Sources', *Journal of the Iraqi Academy, Syriac Corporation* 5 (1979–80), pp. 297–326, and J. F. Healey, 'Syriac Sources and the Umayyad Period', in A. Bakhit and R. Schick (eds.), *The Fourth International Conference on the History of Bilad al-Sham During the Umayyad Period* (al-Jāmiyah al-Urdunīyah, 1989), pp. 1–10.

10 R. Thomson and J. Howard-Johnston (eds.), *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos* (Liverpool University Press, 1999). Sebeos' historical chronicle ends in 661.

11 For a recent collection and translation of the non-Islamic sources in the two centuries following the Prophet's death, see R. G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Darwin Press, 1997). An outstanding recent effort has been made to chart the historiography for the whole of the period in: J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxforfd University Press, 2011).

legal document of the Islamic community, the *ḥadīth* or 'Traditions' about the Prophet and what he is reported to have said, the *sīra*, or biographies of the Prophet, and caliphal and annalistic histories. Apart from presenting Islam as a divinely inspired faith, these sources explicitly state that Islam developed quickly, that the Qur'an was codified in the first two decades following the Prophet's death under the reign of ʿUthman (644–656), that it was central to early Islamic faith, and that Islamic law was similarly settled and functioning at the time of the death of the Prophet.[12]

Revisionist Islamic Studies and its Antecedents

Two western scholars in the early to mid-twentieth century took issue with Islam's own account of its origins, but still accepted some of the basic premises offered by the Islamic tradition, including the codification of the Qur'an under ʿUthman. Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921) argued in the second volume of his *Muhammedanische Studien* that traditions had been altered and adjusted by political interests as much as two centuries after Muhammad died.[13] He examined the whole *ḥadīth* tradition using the form-critical hermeneutic developed in nineteenth-century Europe, and argued that the overwhelming majority of *ḥadīth* could not be trusted as reliable witnesses to the life and teachings of Muhammad. Joseph Schacht (1902–69), taking Goldziher's argument a step further, argued that Muslim legists largely ignored the Qur'an as a text until at least the early eighth century. He advanced criticism of the reliability of *ḥadīth* by further arguing that all *ḥadīth* should be assumed false until proven to the contrary.[14] These two scholars laid the essential groundwork for the revisionist scholars' work which developed in the late 1970s, and continues today.

Nonetheless, these two scholars' views have not found instant or universal approval, and more traditional approaches to Islamic Studies continued (and continue) to be advanced. Montgomery Watt attempted to give a summary of the history of the early Islamic period which cast a critical eye on the Islamic sources, given the work of Schacht and Goldziher.[15] Watt, summarizing what

12 A good example of these claims can be found in the earliest biography we have of the Prophet, that of Ibn Ishaq (d. c. 767), for which we now depend on later redactions: A. Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad* (2nd edn. Oxford University Press, 1968). His work is discussed further below.

13 I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. Barber and Stern (Allen and Unwin, 1971), pp. 17–254.

14 J. Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford University Press, 1953).

15 Watt, *The Formative Period*, see the preface, and 63–69.

had gone before but rejecting the extent of Goldziher and Schacht's claims, accepted that upon Muhammad's death Muslims "took over a legal system that was already functioning",[16] that the Qur'an was a text largely fixed in the first century after the death of the Prophet even if there were variant readings,[17] and that the *ḥadīth* and Traditions about Muhammad and what he had said were often reliable.[18] These assumptions presuppose that there was a normative monolithic Islam already established in the first decade after the Prophet's death in 632.

John Wansbrough was in many ways an exemplar of the modern revisionist school of thought, and is often grouped with Patricia Crone and Michael Cook as a founder of revisionism in Islamic Studies. He argued that the Qur'an and Sunna developed simultaneously, as a means of providing particular credentials for the prophethood of Muhammad, and that the Qur'an was codified no earlier than the end of the eighth century, and more probably in the ninth.[19] Following the groundwork laid by Goldziher, he continued in his book *The Sectarian Milieu* to argue that Islamic historical sources essentially represent later religious disputes and are of little use for determining early Islamic history.[20] He envisaged a slow development for Islam, in dialogue with the culture of Late Antiquity, and in particular with the Christian ruling elites in Mesopotamia, who continued to exert significant amounts of power even into the ninth century.[21] There were various forms of Islam in this period, and policies were often dictated based on where they could be most effectively exerted. He envisages different parts of the Qur'an being written in different places, and at different times.[22] Although Wansbrough's dating of the Qur'an has not

16 Ibid., p. 65.

17 Ibid., pp. 67–68.

18 Ibid., p. 68.

19 J. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 33–52 and 170–202.

20 J. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 1–49.

21 For more on these elites, see C. Robinson, *Empire and Elites after the Muslim Conquest: The Transformation of Northern Mesopotamia* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 90–108.

22 Wansbrough's argument is theological in character, as he concerned himself with 'salvation history' more than political history. Robinson shows that the Abbasids took a clearly different political stance with the elites of northern Mesopotamia than they did with those in the south, based on the extent to which tribes in the north still maintained power structures more difficult to tax. Not discounting the difficulties in separating the political from the religious in this early period, both approaches argue along similar lines for a period of slow development and crystallization, as described above.

been accepted by most, his larger views on the process of development within Islam hold greater currency, and as mentioned above constitute a substantial portion of modern revisionist thought.

Working at the same time as Wansbrough, Patricia Crone and Michael Cook argued in their seminal work, *Hagarism*, that Islam began as a form of Judeo-Messianism, in which the earliest believers followed a hybrid of Arabian paganism and messianic Judaism.[23] They further suggested that these believers only gradually distinguished themselves from Christians and Jews as time passed, developing their distinctive faith from the earliest conquests up until some time in the ninth century.[24] These scholars were followed by Gerald Hawting,[25] Norman Calder,[26] Andrew Rippin,[27] and others, and typify a generation of scholars who have questioned the traditional account of Islamic origins, arguing that sources within the Islamic tradition are to be treated with great discretion, if used at all as primary sources for historical events.[28] Increasingly diverse opinions within revisionist scholarship have come forth, and a general definition of revisionism is more difficult to make. We can say, however, that in general revisionist scholars on early Islam share several main assumptions including: the early Arabic Islamic sources for the study of 'what really happened' in the first two centuries after the coming of Muhammad are often unreliable, that the main tenets of Islam developed more slowly than has heretofore been thought, that this took place in dialogue with and in reaction to the surrounding native culture and faiths of late antiquity, and that

23 P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 3–4.

24 Ibid., pp. 15–18. This view has undergone only slight revision since *Hagarism's* first appearance, and essentially still stands.

25 For example, G. R. Hawting, 'The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca', in G. H. A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (1982), pp. 23–47 and G. R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam, from Polemic to History* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

26 For example, N. Calder, 'From Midrash to Scripture: the Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition', *Le Muséon* 101 (1988), pp. 375–402 and N. Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

27 For example, see A. Rippin, 'Literary Analysis of Koran, Tafsir, and Sira: The Methodologies of John Wansbrough', in I. Warraq (ed.), *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book* (Prometheus Books, 1998), pp. 351–63.

28 Certainly alternative uses for the early Islamic sources have been put to use by the revisionists, in attempts to gain what little information can be gleaned from the thought processes, and traditions of early Muslims. The point at issue, however, is their value for establishing the 'historical record' for the early Islamic community.

the Qurʾan and/or Muhammad were not the sole or necessarily even primary sources of authority for the early Islamic community. These so-called skeptical 'revisionists' have urged the modern historian to step outside of the Islamic tradition and 'start again', in an effort to discover the true history of early Islamic origins.[29]

Contemporary Islamic Studies

As mentioned above, the revisionists and their methodology have not been accepted wholesale, and there are those who continue to work from a more traditional perspective, although often scholars have had to modify their approaches in light of the revisionists' work. Attempts to develop a chronological framework for the Prophet's life are now often made by trying to cross reference independently emerging traditions, whose similarity may only be explicable by the reliability of the account.[30] Others have focused on the fact that early Islamic literature varies in literary style, and so may arguably date from different periods. Fred Donner has argued that, given the ahistorical character of the Qurʾan, we should be inclined to view it as the product of an ahistorical culture contemporary to the life of the Prophet. He opposes the literary qualities of the Qurʾan to later Islamic source material, which differ in style and emphasis, and must therefore confirm his hypothesis that that material, such as the *sīra* or *ḥadīth*, dates from a later period.[31] Donner's critique of what he calls the "Skeptical Approach" allows for the use of Islamic literature, and is most critical of that strand of modern revisionism which would do away with the Islamic sources altogether.

29 The expression "start again" is Crone's. Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 3.

30 A good example of this is found in A. Gorke and G. Schoeler, 'Reconstructing the Earliest *sīra* Texts: the Higra in the Corpus of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr', *Der Islam* 82.2 (2005), pp. 209–20, where a summary of revisionist arguments is made, followed by an attempt to show in what ways sources for the Prophet's biography can be recovered from the available later Islamic literature by attempting to corroborate *ḥadīth* and biographical information of the Prophet based on the fact that such information was transmitted by more than one scholar working independently. Gorke admits, however, that such an approach can only take us back to traditions about the Prophet in the first century AH, and not necessarily to the Prophet himself.

31 This is an argument made by Donner regarding the Qur'an, in opposition to *ḥadīth*, which he identifies as markedly different in character, and thus of potentially earlier date. See Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, pp. 35–97.

Other Islamicists have tried working again with the material evidence to dispute revisionist findings that the Islamic Scriptures were codified later than the Islamic tradition says, that is, during the reign of ʿUthman (644–56). Whelan has reexamined the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock, and has attempted to argue that not only are the inscriptions 'Qur'anic', but that enough of the phrases coincide with material in the Qur'an that they should be seen as the product of the Qur'an, rather than the production of a milieu which had yet to canonize its Holy Scripture.[32] Similarly, newly discovered Islamic inscriptions are sometimes being used to suggest that the Qur'an might have been treated as a special literary project, not subject to the normal rules for Arabic writing in the period immediately following the Prophet's death. Ghabban has suggested that if so, a significant re-think must be carried out regarding conclusions for how the Qur'an was transmitted and codified.[33]

Nonetheless, the fact is that the earliest stand-alone biography of the Prophet dates from the middle of the ninth century in the form we have it. This is the biography written by Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham (d. 833).[34] The work is based on a work of the eighth century written by Ibn Ishaq (d. 767), which has been lost in its original form (if there was one); other versions exist as well, but none is earlier than Ibn Hisham. What this means is that we are dependent on a biography of Muhammad written nearly two hundred years after his death.[35] Similarly, the earliest collections of the *ḥadīth* date from no earlier than the end of the eighth century, and although these written sayings claim to be handed down orally from the Prophet in a chain of *isnads*, critical scholarship is not able to prove that these date back to the early or mid-first Islamic century.[36] Canonically sanctioned collections of *ḥadīth* themselves date from no earlier than the middle of the ninth century. Malik ibn Anas (c. 711–795) is credited with what is usually thought to be one of the earliest, if not the

32 E. Whelan, 'Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qur'an', *JAOS* 118.1 (1998), pp. 1–14.

33 Ghabban and Hoyland, 'The Inscription of Zuhayr'. Ghabban's newly discovered inscription dated to 644–45 contains diacritical marks necessary for clarifying meaning in Arabic, which had been thought the earliest Qur'ans did not employ. He points out that many of the recent essays published in the *Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* (McCauliffe, 2006) depend on the view that diacritical marks were not used in the earliest period of Arabic writing, which, it seems, may be a false assumption.

34 Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*.

35 See Guillaume's introduction for his view that a large portion of what Ibn Ishaq wrote is preserved in the recension of Ibn Hisham which has come down to us.

36 An isnad, or a 'chain of authorities', is a brief introduction to a *ḥadīth*, offering the source of authority for that saying of the prophet as it was transmitted in the oral tradition.

earliest compilation, although his was not accepted as part of the earliest accepted canon, and can only be reconstructed from later sources.[37]

Works such as that of John of Damascus, therefore, predate all of these, and often provide information not otherwise found in the later sources, and for this reason it should be straightforward to argue that he was not necessarily wrong in his assessments, even if proving him 'right' is beyond the realm of possibility. To discover 'what really happened' in mid-seventh century Islamic practice is not necessarily the goal of the contemporary historian working in Islamic studies, though many still aspire to it.[38] Some revisionists argue that the problems facing attempts to establish a reasonably accurate historical record are insurmountable, largely due to the unreliability of the Arabic sources.[39] Others who yet fall into the 'revisionist' camp, loosely defined, still hope to recover

37 Dutton argues that the *Muwatta'* was in its complete form in 150 AH/767 AD Yet even if this is true, Dutton admits that the text, as in the case with Ibn Ishaq, must be reconstructed from later sources, of which he points to nine extant recensions, the earliest and most reliable of which comes from 179 AH/797 AD If this is so, it certainly is the earliest collection of *ḥadīth*, albeit one dating in the form we have from at least 50 years after John wrote his work. See Y. Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law: the Qur'an, the Muwatta' and Madinan 'Amal* (Curzon, 1999), pp. 22–27. For the view that this text is of ninth century Cordoban provenance, see Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, p. 38 and 146. I thank Dr. Christopher Melchert for pointing out to me that Malik died in 795, and not 796 as commonly thought.

38 See for example, H. Motzki, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz: ihre Entwicklung in Mekka bis zur Mitte des 2./8 Jahrhunderts* (Franz Steiner, 1991); H. Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence: Meccan Fiqh Before the Classical Schools*, trans. M. H. Katz (Brill, 2002), and H. Motzki, 'The Musannaf of 'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani as a Source of Authentic Ahadith of the First Century A.H.', *JNES* 50 (1991), pp. 1–21, where he discusses the 'tradition-historical' approach pioneered in Islamic Studies by Wellhausen, and which attempts a reconstruction of historical events by extracting source material contemporary with the scrutinized event from later sources. See also, Michael Lecker's work, who, in opposition to Goldziher, attempts to reconstruct the text of the 'Constitution of Medina', and has published several articles which make use of the argument that earlier source material can often be extracted from later fabricated material in circumstances where there appears to be no founded reason for having fabricated those sources. See Lecker, *The "Constitution of Medina"*, and M. Lecker, *People, Tribes and Society in Arabia around the time of Muhammad* (Ashgate, 2005). Rubin attempts a similar reconstruction of the pre-Islamic Ka'ba, based on the later Muslim sources. U. Rubin, 'The Ka'ba: Aspects of its Ritual Functions and Position in Pre-Islamic and early Islamic times', *JSAI* 8 (1986), pp. 97–131.

39 Most characteristic of this school are John Wansbrough, Gerard Hawting, and Andrew Rippin. See Rippin, 'Literary Analysis of Koran, Tafsir, and Sira', for a summary of Wansbrough's thought.

the historical record. In general revisionists agree that a careful study of the sources contemporaneous with the development of Islam suggests that there was no clear normative set of practices and beliefs; rather there were many practices and beliefs. All of this makes it possible to demonstrate that we cannot say John fails to give a reasonably accurate accounting of the Palestinian/Syrian Islam with which he was familiar.

John of Damascus, the Black Stone, and the Kaʿba

John was clearly informed about at least some traditions surrounding the Kaʿba in Mecca, as he mentions it specifically by name, and makes reference to the Black Stone inside. He claims that the stone was originally worshipped as the goddess Aphrodite, a claim repeated in later Byzantine commentators but possibly originating with Epiphanius of Salamis.[40] He writes, "Πῶς οὖν ὑμεῖς λίθῳ προστρίβεσθε κατὰ τὸν Χαβαθὰν ὑμῶν καὶ φιλεῖτε τὸν λίθον ἀσπαζόμενοι;" "How, therefore, is it that you rub yourselves against a stone at your Kaʿba, and you worship the stone by kissing it?"[41] He also appears to be aware of the nature of the environment surrounding the Kaʿba, calling attention a few lines later to the fact that there are no woods in the area.[42]

However, questions have remained about the nature of John's knowledge of the Kaʿba and its traditions. One criticism against John of Damascus was made in 1992 by Raymond Le Coz. In John's chapter on Islam, a few lines after those quoted above, John notes that some of the members of the faith of the Ishmaelites say that the stone to which he refers is the stone on which Abraham had intercourse with Hagar, and others say that it is the stone on which Abraham tied his camel when he sacrificed Isaac. To quote, "Καί τινες αὐτῶν φασιν, ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ τὸν Ἀβραὰμ συνουσιάσαι τῇ Ἄγαρ, ἄλλοι δέ, ὅτι ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν προσέδησε τὴν κάμηλον μέλλων θύειν τὸν Ἰσαάκ." "And some of them respond that Abraham had intercourse with Hagar on it, but others say that he tied the camel on it when he was about to sacrifice Isaac."[43] Le Coz argues John has confused the stone called *Maqām Ibrāhīm* (literally 'station of Abraham'), a stone closely

40 This may first have been suggested in his *Panarion*, and expanded on by later writers. See Khoury, *Polemique Byzantine*, pp. 60–62, 162 f., 240–42, 75–79 for the later Byzantine theologians who identified the stone with the cult of Aphrodite. For John's reference, see Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 64, ln. 92–94.

41 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 64, ln. 79–80.

42 Ibid., ln. 86.

43 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 64, ln. 82.

associated with Abraham in the Islamic tradition, with the famous Black Stone now fixed into the northeastern corner of the Kaʿba. Citing the Qurʾan at 2:121 and 22:27 (passages which deal with Abraham and the construction of the Kaʿba), Le Coz argues that as there is no mention of sacrifice taking place at the Kaʿba itself, John must be confusing some other sacrifice incorporated into the pilgrimage to Mecca with the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. On that basis, he suggests that the ritual sacrifice of sheep at Mina on the 10th day of the month of *Dhū l-Hijjah* (or the month of pilgrimage) was probably associated in John's mind with the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, and that this is perhaps why John has mistakenly associated the Black Stone with Abraham, instead of the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*.[44] Andrew Louth's conclusions about John are based on Le Coz's assumptions, while Montgomery Watt, who does not mention this issue specifically, may be the most dismissive of John's understanding of traditions at the Kaʿba.[45]

In order to consider John's understanding of traditions at the Kaʿba, we must first understand what the various traditions are, including their origins. Many of them, as the reader may already assume, are claimed to originate with material in the Qurʾan, although the elaboration of such traditions was often the work of future generations. Having understood the traditional explanation for these traditions, we can then see if it is possible to explain John's conception given more recent developments in the understanding of these traditions.

The Kaʿba, the Black Stone, and the Maqām Ibrāhīm in the Islamic Tradition

The Kaʿba is a large cubical building located in the center of Mecca around which a present-day Mosque has been built.[46] It has been destroyed and rebuilt several times, both prior to Muhammad's arrival and during the Prophet's

44 Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam*, pp. 117–19.

45 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 80–81. Watt, *Muslim-Christian Encounters*, pp. 70–71. Of these three, to take but three of many, the most charitable to John is Louth, who says, "John has a fairly accurate picture of Islam … though John's replies seem to reveal some misunderstanding of Muslim practice."

46 For the history of how the Kaʿba grew to importance in the Islamic tradition, as well as Muhammad's relation to it, see G. R. Hawting, 'Kaʿba', in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 3, pp. 75–79. For information on Muhammad and his rise to power, see M. A. Cook, *Muhammad* (Oxford University Press, 1996). For sources on Muhammad's life, scholars such as Cook and Kennedy, cited here, have generally drawn on the Qur'an and the earliest written biographies of the Prophet, the most significant of which is Ibn Ishaq's *Sīrah Rasul Allah.*

lifetime.[47] The Arabic word 'Kaʿba' itself appears only twice in the Qur'an, in sura 5:95, and 5:97, although one often reads of '*al-Bayt*', or 'the house', which has been identified in the Islamic tradition as the Kaʿba.[48] The Islamic tradition attributes its origin first to Adam, but after having been later destroyed, the Qur'an tells us of its construction by Abraham and Ishmael, and that because of this, it is considered holy.[49] The tradition further holds that over the years between the time of Abraham and Muhammad the monotheistic tradition associated with the Kaʿba was eroded, and various forms of paganism ensued, resulting in the filling of the Kaʿba with idols the local people worshipped. These people are said to be the same who are attacked in the Qur'an as idolaters and polytheists.[50]

Inside the Kaʿba, there is a stone called the Black Stone (due to its color) which has been the subject of veneration in the Islamic tradition.[51] It is referred to in the tradition variously by the names *al-Ḥajar al-Aswad* or *al-Rukn*, the latter of which can also refer to the northeast corner of the Kaʿba, in which the Black Stone is embedded.[52] Curiously, despite its frequent appearance in

---

As mentioned above, the original work was lost, but versions of it survive in later sources. For that biography, see Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*.

47 For this and what follows, see M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Le pèlerinage à la Mekke, étude d'histoire religieuse* (P. Geuthner, 1923), pp. 27–41, and A. J. Wensinck, 'Kaʿba', EI^2 vol. 4, pp. 317–22. Both historians and traditional Islamic accounts agree that the Kaʿba in Mecca has experienced destruction and reconstruction since it was first built, regardless of when that was; the Muslim tradition argues for the beginning of the world or Adam, modern scholarship expressing a variety of positions, as discussed below.

48 G. R. Hawting, 'Kaʿba', in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 3, pp. 75–79.

49 "And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the house; [He said], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. You are the Hearer and the Knower. Our Lord, make us surrender to You and make from our seed a community that will surrender to You, and show us Your rites, and relent towards us. You are the Relenting and the Merciful.'" (Qur'an 2:127–128). For a good summary of this traditional perspective, see U. Rubin, 'Hanifiyya and Kaʿba: An Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of Din Ibrahim', *JSAI* 13 (1990), pp. 85–112.

50 F. M. Donner, 'The Historical Context', in J. D. McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾān* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 23–40, at 24.

51 Pilgrimage is regarded as one of the five pillars of Islam, whose origins will be discussed below. The five pillars are today regarded as obligatory elements to being considered a good Muslim. Whether the stone itself is kissed and touched is not prescribed, but is a practice common among the people, as a result of the tradition that Muhammad honored the stone by doing likewise.

52 Hawting, 'The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary', pp. 41–43. The stone's actual size is approximately 16cm × 10cm.

Islamic literature concerning both the pre-Islamic and Islamic period, modern scholarship has paid much less attention to the Black Stone than the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*.[53] The Black Stone's status during the period of *Jahiliya*, the time before Muhammad, is not clear. The Islamic tradition maintains that the stone was sent down by God, and was originally white, but became tarnished, either by the sins of man, or due to fire.[54] It has also undergone a degree of movement and damage prior to finding its current emplacement in the Kaʿba (a fact of great importance to us, as we shall see shortly). In 683 AD it is said to have been removed and broken during the attack on Mecca by the Umayyads in their war against ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Zubayr (624–692).[55] In circa 930 the stone was taken by the Qarmatians to Bahrain and held for ransom until 951.[56]

Adjacent to the Kaʿba is another, larger stone called the '*Maqām Ibrāhīm*' or 'Station of Abraham'. This has also acquired some significance in Islamic practice: it is said by the tradition to be the stone on which Abraham stood when he and his son Ishmael built the Kaʿba. It is sixty centimeters high, and ninety wide, and identified with a stone mentioned in the Qur'an.[57] Common belief

53 There is no article on the Black Stone in either in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*², or the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, two basic starting points for historians of Islam. Some cursory material can be found under the entries for 'Mecca' and 'Kaʿba' in these works. Slightly better is *The Brill Dictionary of Religion* and *Brill's New Pauly* under the same entries. The stone has attracted the attention of scientists in a few short articles published by scholars suggesting that it is a meteorite or the result of meteoritic collision in the Arabian desert, but a proper identification of what it is made of is still wanting. See H. J. Axon, 'The Black Stone of the Kaʿba: Suggestions as to Its Constitution', *Journal of Materials Science Letters* 1.1 (1982), pp. 10–12, and E. Thomsen, 'New Light on the Origin of the Holy Black Stone of the Kaʿba', *Meteoritics* 15.1 (1980), pp. 87–91.

54 Al-Azraqi, the oldest historian of Mecca whose work survives, says that the stone was given to Ishmael by the Angel Gabriel. For the tradition of how it came to be black, see H. F. Wüstenfeld (ed.), *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka von Abul-Walid Muhammed bin Abdallah el-Azraki* (Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1857–61) vol. 1, pp. 150–51. Further traditions continued to be elaborated for the reasons of the stone's color, such as that menstruating women touched it. See F. E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 6.

55 See Peters, *The Hajj*, pp. 60–64 for a translation of the relevant section from al-Azraqi, cited in Peters as Wüstenfeld (ed.), *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, pp. 140–44.

56 W. Madelung, 'Karmati', EI² vol. 4, pp. 660–65.

57 For the stone's dimensions, see Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Le pèlerinage à la Mekke*, p. 103. The term '*Maqām Ibrāhīm*' appears twice in the Qur'an. "And when We made the house a meeting-place and a sanctuary for the people: 'Take for yourselves Abraham's station as a place for prayer,' and We made a covenant with Abraham and Ishmael: 'Purify My house for those who visit [it] and those who cleave to it and those who bow and prostrate

holds that the impressions found on it are those from Abraham's feet. It is similarly an object of veneration to this day, although as in the case with the Black Stone, there is no great agreement as to why specifically it is to be venerated.

In the preceding traditional account of the Kaʿba and the sacred stones, I have limited my discussion of the traditions which surround the Kaʿba and the various rites associated with the Pilgrimage. This is because while the Islamic tradition is in agreement that Muhammad established traditions involving these stones and that he explicated what rites one should follow, there is large disagreement over the nature of Muhammad's prescriptions, and the origins of some of the material items around the Kaʿba.[58] The Qurʾan is silent when it comes to many of the specific traditions, and what little material appears there was expanded on differently by different exegetes. To take one example, there are numerous traditions involving the sanctity of the footprints on the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*, and how they came to appear on the *Maqām*. One version of how Abraham's footprints came to be imprinted on the stone is that it happened while Ishmael was handing him stones for building the Kaʿba. Another tradition holds that the miracle happened when Ishmael's wife washed Abraham's head while he stood on the stone. Yet another holds that it happened when Abraham stood on the stone to call the people to perform the Pilgrimage to Mecca after he had finished the building of the Kaʿba.[59] Different exegetical accounts of sections of the Qurʾan regarding the different stones have provided scholars with ample material to argue that many of the accounts are not reliable as sources, and that many Islamic practices and doctrines did not crystallize in Mecca as has been previously thought.[60] It is to some of that scholarship

---

themselves.'" (Sura 2:125), and "The first house founded for the people was at Bakka, a blessed [place] and a guidance for created beings. In it are clear signs—the station of Abraham. Those who enter it are safe" (Sura 3:96–97).

58 Although above I have said that traditions at the Kaʿba were established by Muhammad, it is also commonly believed that many of the traditions were originally established by Abraham and only reestablished by Muhammad.

59 See M. J. Kister, '*Maqām Ibrāhīm*: A Stone with an Inscription', *Le Muséon* 84 (1971), pp. 477–91 at 479–81. Sacred footprints are a common feature to many religious traditions. The Dome of the Rock is said to contain Muhammad's footprints from the time he made his midnight journey. But there are also cases of holy footprints found in the Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian traditions. See P. Hasan, 'The Footprint of the Prophet', *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), pp. 335–43.

60 See especially Nevo and Koren, 'The Origins of the Muslim Descriptions of the Jahili Meccan Sanctuary'. Koren and Nevo question not only how practices may have been conducted, but also the location of the sanctuary itself, while their larger criticisms are of the tradition and location and method of development of Islam.

that we must now turn before returning to John's view in order to understand his perspective.

An Untraditional Perspective

There is no consensus in modern scholarship regarding the importance of Mecca and the Kaʿba in the pre-Islamic period, or in what consisted the beliefs of its inhabitants prior to Muhammad's return to Mecca from Medina around 628. As far as the sources are concerned, the Qur'an itself has very little geography, and mentions Mecca at most twice, and apart from the Qur'an, no contemporary sources mention either the Black Stone, or the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*.[61] While some scholars such as Uri Rubin have been able to attempt a reconstruction of much of the history of the Kaʿba and its functions in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period through later sources,[62] the paucity of contemporary source material mentioning Mecca and the stones presents a serious obstacle to the easy acceptance of any such reconstructions.

This has given scholars reason to question Mecca's overall importance both in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period. It seems clear, for example, that Mecca was not initially the direction of prayer, or *qibla*, for Muslims.[63] According to the tradition, Muhammad changed the *qibla* when his relations with the Jews in Medina deteriorated, and he began to look on the Kaʿba as the sanctuary in need of religious re-appropriation.[64] The tradition further holds that it was widely believed by the local inhabitants of Mecca that Abraham was an early monotheist (*ḥanīf*) who had founded the Kaʿba, making both it and Mecca of central importance in the ritual life of the Hijaz. On the other hand, scholars such as Patricia Crone argue that Mecca prior to the rise of

61 An excellent article by Patricia Crone detailing what we can know about Muhammad and Mecca dated 31 August 2006 can be found at http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/mohammed_3866.jsp. Mecca is mentioned once in the Qur'an in *Sura* 48:24, and may make a second reference to it at *Sura* 3:90, where the word *Bakka* is often taken by scholars to refer to Mecca.

62 Rubin, 'The Kaʿba'.

63 This much is accepted by both tradionists and revisionists, inasmuch as the change in direction appears in the Qur'an itself, albeit without the locations of either the prior place, or the new place of *qibla*. See Sura 2:142–50, 3:96, and J. Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law: Islamic Theories of Abrogation* (Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 179–83.

64 Donner, 'The Historical Context', pp. 27–30.

Islam was a place of little importance and trade.[65] She has called into question the significance of the Kaʿba in the pre-Islamic period and the time of its first construction.[66]

Others, such as Gerald Hawting, have questioned to what extent the later Islamic tradition accurately presents the beliefs of the local inhabitants in pre-Islamic Mecca as idolatrous and polytheistic, as well as how much of Abraham and his supposed relationship to the Kaʿba they were aware. His book entitled *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam* argued that what is reported in the later Islamic sources regarding the religious beliefs of the pre-Islamic peoples in seventh-century Arabia "should not be understood primarily as a reflection of real historical conditions."[67] Evidence that the Arabs of the Hijaz in the pre-Islamic period were conversant with monotheistic ideas of the Abrahamic tradition is scarce, and scholars have attempted to argue such familiarity on the basis of literary sources such as that of Sozomen, a fifth-century bishop of Gaza, who refers to the Ishmaelites coming into contact with Jews, and learning from them of their common descent from Abraham.[68] Hawting argues that authors producing material like that of Sozomen may only be trying to make sense of why the Arabs of whom they know practice circumcision and refrain from eating pork, and that there is "no compelling reason to think that ideas about Abraham as the first monotheist, of him as the builder of the Kaʿba, or of the Arabs as descendants of Abraham and Ishmael were current among the Arabs of the Hijaz before the time of the Arab conquest of the Middle East."[69]

Still others, who accept the idea that the pre-Islamic Arabs were pagans, doubt the veracity of the traditional Islamic account of early Islamic ritual practices, which would have these practices fixed from the start. Kister, writing

---

65 Although see P. Crone, 'Quraysh and the Roman Army: Making Sense of the Meccan Leather Trade', *BSOAS* 70.1 (2007), pp. 63–88 for her latest hypothesis that the Quraysh may have been leather traders, possibly revising her earlier work.

66 P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 134–37. Wensinck, who followed a reference to Mecca in the second century from Ptolemy which Crone disputes, wrote that, "Aside from the Muslim traditions, practically nothing is known of the history of the Kaʿba. The sole reason for presuming that the Kaʿba was already in existence in the second century AD is the mention of Mecca.", EI² vol. 4, p. 318. Thus, on Crone's reading, if the reference to Mecca is wrong, so is the only piece of non-Islamic evidence for presuming the Kaʿba's early existence.

67 Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*, p. 20. For his elaboration of the question of polytheism vs. monotheism in pre-Islamic Mecca, see pp. 1–19.

68 A. C. Zenos, C. D. Hartranft, and P. Schaff (trans.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus From A.D. 323 to A.D. 425.* (T & T Clark, 1891), 6.38.

69 Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*, p. 38.

about the eighth- and ninth-century Islamic authors, takes for granted the point regarding Islamic ritual practice around the Kaʿba: "It is obvious that these diverse traditions reflect differences in the opinions of various circles of Muslim scholars and indicate that in the early period of Islam many ritual prescriptions were not yet firmly established."[70] Perhaps the most extreme example of this kind of thinking can be seen in the work of Koren and Nevo, who like Kister accept that the pre-Islamic Arabs were pagans, but doubt the veracity of the written sources so fully that they rely entirely on the sparse archaeological evidence. They argue that the eighth- and ninth-century Islamic jurists relied on observations they made of contemporaneous practices in the Negev to recreate a history of the pre-Islamic sanctuary and the cults associated with it in the Hijaz.[71] They further suggest that pagan sanctuaries and practices in the Negev were used as models for the jurists, who no longer had access to first-hand knowledge of the Jahili Meccan Sanctuary. They conclude that in fact the Arabs remained pagans well after the coming of Muhammad, if indeed the Prophet existed in the first place. While Koren and Nevo's argument reaches too far and is in parts falsifieable, their case illustrates the extent to which paucity of available material evidence has hampered investigation of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic sanctuary and its cults.[72]

Further, scholars have shown that early scholars in the Islamic tradition often used different terms to delineate the same ritual objects and often varied details of stories to support their particular versions of the origins of Islamic practice. Hawting has shown that at times the Black Stone has been confused with the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*, at least insofar as the names of the different objects

70 M. J. Kister, 'On "Concessions" and Conduct. A Study in Early Hadith', in G. H. A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 89–108, at 89.

71 Nevo and Koren, 'The Origins of the Muslim Descriptions of the Jahili Meccan Sanctuary'. Koren and Nevo do not address, in this article, the question of whether there was a sanctuary, and if so where it was located. They only try to show from where the Muslim jurists' ideas about the sanctuary, as they believed it to have been in Mecca, originated. For their larger arguments, see Y. D. Nevo and J. Koren, *Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State* (Prometheus, 2003). For a stark refutation of some of their conclusions, see Robinson, 'Early Islamic History: Parallels and Problems'.

72 Hawting shows that Koren and Nevo's explanation, while possibly accounting for some of the archaeological evidence in the Negev, makes too little use of the literary sources and that "… there is little or no reason to think that the sort of details and stories that Muslim tradition presents about the *Jāhilīyah* reflect conditions there [in the Negev]." Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*, pp. 40–41.

have sometimes been used interchangeably.[73] Lammens argued that the *Maqām Ibrāhīm* was sometimes used as a synonym for the Kaʿba itself, a line which Hawting has supported.[74] In one case, disparate traditions regarding the same history commenting on a passage in the Qurʾan where Abraham is seen praying for some of his offspring refer to the same item using different vocabulary identified with the *Maqām Ibrāhīm* (*al-Maqām*) in one account, the Black Stone (*al-Rukn*) in another, the well at the Kaʿba itself (*bir*) in a third, and the *al-Hijr*, a semicircular construction on the north side of the Kaʿba, in a fourth.[75]

It has also been shown that the location of the sacrifice Abraham makes of his son has varied in the extant Qurʾanic exegetical accounts. Calder has demonstrated that different traditions locate the sacrifice in different places, partly as a result of the story developing out of oral tradition, and partly to lend credence to the importance of Mecca as a sanctuary site.[76] The tradition that Abraham attempted to make the sacrifice in Mina is present, but so is the one that he attempted to sacrifice him at the Kaʿba itself, on a hill, or the Thabir Valley.[77] In still other traditions, it appears that Abraham sacrificed his son on Mt. Thabir itself, or even in Syria or Jerusalem.[78]

All of this information casts considerable light on what John reports, and how he might have come to his own particular claims regarding traditions at the Kaʿba. It has even been argued that the names which Muslims used to describe these three distinct items at the Kaʿba originated in a Jewish milieu, in the context of Jewish sanctuary ideas, and that the process whereby names were given to the three objects did not crystallize for some time later than the Islamic tradition allows.[79] Let us turn now again to John's description and reconsider how his observations might best be understood.

---

73 Hawting, 'The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary'.

74 H. Lammens, 'Le Sanctuaire preislamites …', *Melanges de la Faculte Orientale de l'Universite St Joseph de Beyrouth* 11 (1926), pp. 41–73 and Hawting, 'The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary'.

75 Hawting, 'The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary', pp. 40–42.

76 Calder, 'From Midrash to Scripture'. It should also be noted that the identity of Abraham's son also varies from Isaac to Ishmael.

77 Calder, 'From Midrash to Scripture'. Of the six versions of the narrative translated by Calder in the Islamic tradition, Version 3 makes the location of the sacrifice in Mina, Version 5 at the Kaʿba (called *al-bayt*, or 'the house'), Versions 1 and 4 on a hill, and Version 6 in a valley near Mt. Thabir. Version 2 does not specify the location, but it is implied that it was just outside of Mecca, as Abraham and his son set out from there.

78 Calder, 'From Midrash to Scripture', p. 387.

79 Hawting, 'The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary', pp. 25–28. Hawting shows that up until now, two explanations have been offered when scholars have recognized that certain

The Damascene's Observations Given the Untraditional Perspective

As seen above, the traditions surrounding the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*, the Black Stone, and the Kaʿba were neither clearly articulated in the Islamic tradition, nor likely well established at the time when John was writing. Thus another theory for the Damascene's description of events at the Kaʿba presents itself as reasonable: John reported Islamic practice as it was held in his time, by those persons who informed him. The claim that he was confused is met by the argument that John reflected what was given to him from a source which may have either used a different name for an object at the Kaʿba, or associated a certain practice that was at that time considered acceptable and authentic though later not recognized as such. Indeed, such a case is presented above, where John identifies two distinct ideas coming from Muslims regarding their reason for venerating the stone that they do; a) because Abraham had intercourse with Hagar on it, or b) because it was on it that he tied his camel when he was preparing to sacrifice Isaac. In general John presents the Ishmaelites as being disorganized and without a coherent faith. As we have seen in the case of the Kaʿba, the names that are used in the classical practice of later centuries to signify certain stones and structures were not necessarily the names used to describe them in the seventh and eighth centuries, and John may have simply used the different names to explain the same events.

Further, we may also argue that John understood the stone to which Abraham is supposed to have either tied his camel or on which he had intercourse with Hagar as the Black Stone, and not the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*, without conceding that he necessarily confused the traditions about which he learned. The Black Stone itself is said to have been moved around a number of times in the Islamic tradition, and there are different reports about where the stone itself was first found. In one tradition it was a part of the Kaʿba that Adam first built, but in another the stone was originally found on *Abū Qubays*, a nearby mountain overlooking Mecca.[80] The earliest historian of Mecca, al-Azraqi, has

features of Islam parallel those of Judaism: the Prophet or the Muslims 'borrowed' beliefs, rituals, etc. as Islam came into contact with Judaism and other religions, or that such parallels are the result of both religions being of 'Semitic' background, which pre-dated Islam and Judaism, and so certain beliefs are common between them. Hawting offers a third option; "the Muslim sanctuary at Mecca should not be regarded as simply a remnant of Arab paganism … it is a continuation of ideas which had developed in non-Arab circles before the conquests." He does not, however, say how much later names were fixed, but it is clear from the context that a time after John's death circa 750 is within his consideration, p. 28.

80 Rubin, 'The Kaʿba', pp. 120–21.

it that the stone was saved on *Abū Qubays* during the great flood after Adam had built the Kaʿba, and was returned to Abraham for inclusion in the rebuilding of the Kaʿba in his time.[81] Thus it can be seen that both the place from where the Black Stone originates, and (as we have seen above), the place where Abraham is said to have sacrificed his son, have not been fixed in the Islamic tradition, and in at least some traditions Abraham is closely associated with both stones. This is important because Le Coz's criticism of John is based on the claim that John must have confused the Black Stone with the *Maqām Ibrāhīm* since the Black Stone is a rock fixed in the wall of the Kaʿba and seemingly divorced from sacrifice, while the *Maqām Ibrāhīm* is supposedly the stone associated with Abraham in the Islamic tradition. It should be clear from the foregoing, however, that none of the Islamic traditions, all of which post-date John, can be used to show that John was mistaken or confused in his assertions regarding the stones at the Kaʿba in Mecca.

Rivers in Paradise

I have tried to show above how John of Damascus is not necessarily "confused" when referring to early Islamic practices and beliefs surrounding the Kaʿba, wherever the Kaʿba itself was originally located.[82] It is rather the Islamic tradition that is confused, in the sense that minds had not been made up about several rituals. My aim was to show that evidence available to this point does not allow one to conclude that John was in error regarding his statements. I would like now to turn to another example which illustrates this point more fully. In this section we will consider what John says about the rivers in Paradise, and compare John's record of this tradition with other important early non-Arabic sources for Islam. By doing so, I hope to show that a claim of John's being either confused or misguided must be accompanied by the claim that so were a number of other authors, and that the claim for John's confusion is less plausible than one which posits that early Islamic understanding regarding the rivers was either not yet widely known or accepted when John was writing.

In his text on Islam, John identifies three rivers in paradise as he understands the Islamic tradition to teach. He writes, "Τρεῖς γάρ φατε ποταμοὺς ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ῥέειν· ὕδατος, οἴνου καὶ γάλακτος."[83] "For you say that three rivers

81 Wüstenfeld (ed.), *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, pp. 477–78.

82 Koren and Nevo have suggested the Negev, Patricia Crone has argued a town north west of Mecca, while traditionists hold to Mecca.

83 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 66, ln. 131–32.

will flow for you in paradise: water, wine, and milk." In case we might mistakenly think John is briefly summarizing Islamic belief without paying attention to specifics such as the precise number of rivers, he reiterates his claim that the Ishmaelites speak of three rivers in paradise a few lines later: "Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἠρωτήσατε αὐτόν, ὡς ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν τριῶν διηγόρευσεν ὀνειροπολούμενος ποταμῶν."[84] "But neither did you ask him yourself about the three rivers he spoke about from his dreams."

John's identification of *three* rivers in paradise is significant, because the Qur'an clearly identifies four. Reference to the number of rivers and the types of rivers is found in the Qur'an at Sura 47:15. The passage reads,

> The likeness of the Garden which the god-fearing have been promised: in it there are rivers of water whose taste remains pure; and rivers of milk whose taste does not go sour; and rivers of wine, a pleasure for those who drink; and rivers of purest honey; in it they will have some of every kind of fruit and forgiveness from their Lord.

Apart from Sura 47, however, no other place in the Qur'an contains mention of the kinds of rivers themselves. There is discussion in several places of rivers in and under paradise, but without referring to either the number of rivers, or the types of rivers to be found there.[85] Several scholars have taken for granted that John must have received his information regarding the rivers and their types from the Qur'an. Sahas appeared to have been aware of the discrepancy between John's accounting of the rivers and that found in the Qur'an, but passes by it in a footnote, considering paradise not to be the focus of the passage.[86] While it does appear that paradise is not the focus of the passage (which is instead concerned with the story of the she-camel in which the description of paradise appears), Sahas has not considered carefully John's repeated emphasis on the fact that there are *three* rivers, and fails to notice that his named three do not appear to correspond to the names of rivers found in

84 Ibid., ln. 143–44.

85 See for example Sura 2:25, where rivers in paradise are discussed.

86 While Sahas cites passages from the Qur'an which deal with rivers in paradise, he makes only brief mention of the fact that no passage in the Qur'an corresponds to John's description of the rivers, and writes that John "is aware of the Koranic teaching of Paradise under which flow rivers ..." Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 92, n. 4. Also Hoyland, following Khoury, takes for granted Khoury's supposed proof of this fact. P. Khoury, 'Jean Damascène et l'Islam', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 7 (1957–8), pp. 44–63, 8, 313–39 and Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, p. 487.

other sources. What is clear is that John's source for Islamic belief in the rivers and types of rivers must not be the Qur'an, at least as we know it today.

It is also clear from a close examination of John's discussion of Paradise that John did not draw on the same source for information regarding Islam as did other early chroniclers working in Syria and Palestine such as Theophilus of Edessa (695–785), (preserved in Theophanes, Dionysius of Tell-Mahre, and Agapius[87]) referred to earlier.[88] In the entry for the year AM 6122 (629/30 AD), Theophanes takes some time to describe what he has learned of the new 're-ligion' of the Arabs.[89] In that description three rivers are found in paradise, but a different three from those that John offers. "τὸν δὲ παράδεισον σαρκικῆς βρώσεως καὶ πόσεως καὶ μίξεως γυναικῶν ἔλεγεν ποταμόν τε οἴνου καὶ μέλιτος καὶ γάλακτος …".[90] In place of water, we find honey (μέλιτος) in Theophanes' text.[91] Theophanes' source, Theophilus, as discussed earlier, was working at nearly the same time as John, but in a different area, John working in or near Jerusalem, while Theophilus worked in Damascus and later Baghdad.[92]

87 See above, note 290.

88 Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad'. Conrad shows conclusively that Theophanes' long known 'Eastern Source' for the period between 630–750 was Theophilus of Edessa. For a breakdown of what material Theophanes took from Theophilus, see Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, pp. lxxiv–xci. Jeffreys shows that Theophanes' dependence on Theophilus at the exclusion of other sources must have been extensive, even if not complete for the period in question. E. Jeffreys, 'Notes Toward a Discussion of the Depiction of the Umayyads in Byzantine Literature', in J. Haldon and L. I. Conrad (eds.), *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Darwin Press, 2004), pp. 133–48, at 138. See also L. I. Conrad, 'Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some Indications of Intercultural Transmission', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 15 (1990), pp. 1–44 for the same.

89 Theopanes, like John, is not consistent in his use of terms to describe Islam. In one place he refers to the "θρησκεία" of the Arabs, whereas in another place he writes of the "αἱρέσεως" of them.

90 De Boor (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 334, ln. 22–24: "… and he said that this paradise was one of carnal eating and drinking and intercourse with women, and had a river of wine, honey, and milk …" (Mango and Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 465).

91 Wine, honey, and milk are also the names of the three rivers found in Agapius, who, as discussed earlier, was also drawing on Theophilus for his information regarding the rivers in paradise. See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, p. 404 for an English translation of the passage, found in Vasiliev, 'Kitab al-'Unvan', p. 457.

92 See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, pp. 400–01, and see above for discussion in Chapter 2. I do not mean to suggest that a meeting between the two would be impossible, but is unlikely on the balance of probabilities. For the increasing emphasis on confessional

What has emerged to date regarding Theophilus' work is that it—and he—is of Syrian provenance. Beyond that, it has been difficult to claim much, as the transmission of texts and ideas cannot be easily determined.[93] John, while probably writing as much as thirty years before Theophilus, also benefited from growing up in Damascus, and being surrounded by Muslims at the court of the caliph. Yet despite their relative close proximity in age and location, they seem to have received contradictory information regarding Islamic beliefs in this regard. It may well be, however, that John's information is more representative of Palestinian sources, if we suppose he wrote this work while living near Jerusalem. Unfortunately there is not a great deal more material of comparative value between John's work and Theophilus'. Apart from a genealogical history of Muhammad's ancestry not found in John's account, Theophilus includes a few more details about the Muslim paradise, also not mentioned by John.

This being so, only a few possible hypotheses present themselves. It is certainly possible that John may have begun an investigation into Islam only after his move away from Damascus, and thus one explanation for the difference in material about Islam could be that information coming into Palestine might have had one quality, while that entering Syria and Mesopotamia, another. However, it would seem that neither John of Damascus nor Theophilus of Edessa could have drawn on the Qur'an as we know it today for their information about Islam, as both understand a tradition of three rivers in paradise (albeit a different three), and not four, as found in the Qur'an. Both authors paid close attention to detail, and, as I have shown above, John in particular took pains to cite written material *verbatim*. This practice of his was further advanced when it came to matters of Scripture: John wrote on the importance of reading and re-reading Scripture to gain understanding, and quoted from the Christian Scriptures repeatedly.[94] It is thus unlikely that our authors drew on the Qur'an but did so carelessly and mistook the material on the rivers. Neither is it likely that our authors had a theological or didactic reason for distorting this information found in the Qur'an. For while the Old Testament often makes

identity in elite circles to the exclusion of others in this period, see A. Cameron, 'Democratization Revisited: Culture and Late Antique and Early Byzantine Elites', in L. I. Conrad and J. Haldon (eds.), *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Darwin Press, 2004), pp. 91–107, at 100–04. Given our current working chronology, with Theophilus' supposed birth around 695, it is quite probable that John of Damascus was leaving Damascus when Theophilus was still in his 20s.

93 Conrad, 'Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition', pp. 42–44.

94 On the Orthodox Faith 4.17 is devoted to the topic of reading Scripture; Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. II, pp. 209–11. See also the Scripture indices in ibid., pp. 241–48, vol. III, pp. 201–05, and vol. IV, pp. 439–44 for evidence of John's use of Scripture.

repeated reference to the land with rivers of "milk and honey", there is nothing to suggest that a land of three rivers should be more disreputable than a land of four, and one might easily be disposed toward the opposite view given the Christian associations with the number three as in the case with the Trinity.[95] A more probable explanation is that such traditions were not yet firmly established, or perhaps not known in Syria and Palestine, and that while neither author was poorly informed, both drew on the best available information, which varied depending on the source.

One other potentially Greek source which requires mention, once more, is the supposed correspondence between Emperor Leo III (717–741) and Caliph 'Umar II (717–720).[96] What is interesting about this correspondence is that the 'Leo letter' mentions three rivers in the Muslim paradise, the same three as listed by Theophanes (reproducing Theophilus): wine, honey, and milk.[97] This evidence may suggest that Leo and Theophilus received information on Islam from the same geographic regions, or were informed by the same sources. A later Byzantine or Armenian commentator on Islam, such as Euthymius Zigabenus (fl. 1081–1118), added the fourth river of water to his list, as indeed do sources produced in an Islamic milieu.[98]

Further non-Qur'anic sources for the numbers and kinds of rivers in paradise close to John's time can be identified, but correspond to neither of the two we have seen so far. The Syriac Rescension of the Legend of Bahira records all four rivers in its text. In that text, a monk named Sargis Bahira is seen instructing Muhammad in what the Qur'an should say. When Muhammad asks him what he should answer his people concerning what they should eat in paradise, Bahira answers, "There are in Paradise four rivers, one of wine, one of milk, one of honey, and one of cool water. These are: the Tigris of wine, the Euphrates of water, the Pishon of milk, the Gihon of honey."[99] John's immediate theological successor of the Melkite tradition, Theodore Abu Qurrah (c. 750–820), about whom we shall be saying more later, also knows of four

95 The image of a land of "milk and honey" is used repeatedly in the Old Testament, particularly in the Pentateuch. See Exodus 3:8, 3:17, 13:5, 33:3; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 13:27, 14:8, 16:13–14, Deuteronomy 6:3, 11:9, 26:9, 26:15, 27:3, and 31:20.

96 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence'. This text was discussed at further length above in chapter 2.

97 Jeffrey, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence', p. 328. It may be added that George Hamartolos (9th century), who drew on Theophanes for his information on Islam, also lists the same three rivers. See PG 110.868–69.

98 For Euthymius, and his listing of the rivers, see PG 130.1353.

99 See R. Gottheil, 'A Christian Bahira Legend', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 14 (1900), pp. 203–69, at 221 (translation is Gottheil's).

rivers in the Muslim paradise. Quoting some Muslims he says he encountered upon descending from a mountain he writes, "For those who do good, the reward is paradise. From underneath it there will flow forth rivers of water, milk, honey, and wine—a delight for those who drink it."[100] Theodore's awareness of the rivers suggests that he is working in a time when information on Islam and the Qur'an has moved on. This would appear especially so, as Theodore is often viewed as relying on John's work heavily, to the point of even being referred to as a spiritual disciple of his.[101] One might expect Theodore to have gained his knowledge of Islam from John's writings, but at least in this instance it appears otherwise. Alphonse Mingana's Ancient Syriac Translation of the Qur'an, written by Barsalibi (d. 1171) from a Syriac non-Chalcedonian Orthodox background also contains a listing of the four rivers.[102] It is clear that Christians would come to have information coincident with that found in the Qur'an regardless of socio-linguistic or confessional background, but did not understand a consistent number and kind of rivers in the eighth century.

It remains to be seen what some of the earliest Islamic sources record about the number and types of rivers, even if those sources date from a time later than the ones used here. The rivers do not feature in Ibn Ishaq's lengthy life of the Prophet, discussed earlier above, and do not appear in *al-Muwatta'* of Malik ibn Anas (711–795), perhaps our earliest extant source of *ḥadīth*.[103] A full investigation of similar such sources is outside of the scope of the present work, but I admit the probability of later Islamic sources reflecting the same

100 See J. C. Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah* (Brigham Young University Press, 2005), p. 6. Lamoreaux's translation of the Arabic text precedes what he considers to be a serviceable edition, on which he is currently working. Thus references to Theodore's Arabic corpus will be made to his translation.

101 Theodore could not have been taught by John, as the latter died before the former was born. Lamoreaux has argued that Theodore was probably not connected to St. Sabas itself, but Ignace Dick's article still stands, and establishes a clear link between the thought of the two. More about this will be said in the next chapter. I. Dick, 'Un continuateur arabe de saint Jean Damascène: Theodore Abuqurra, évêque melkite de Harran', *Proche-Orient chrétien*, 12–13 (1962–63), pp. 209–23, 317–32, 114–29.

102 A. Mingana (ed.), *An Ancient Syriac Translation of the Kur'an Exhibiting New Verses and Variants* (University Press, 1925), p. 46.

103 Both of these works have been consulted in translation. For Ibn Ishaq, see Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*, and for the *Muwatta'*, see A. A. Bewley (ed.), *Al-Muwatta' of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The First Formulation of Islamic Law* (Kegan Paul International, 1989). There are, however, a multitude of recensions for this work, and to date there is no critical edition although it has been argued that they differ little in their details. Concerning the text, see Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law*, pp. 22–31.

four rivers mentioned in the Qur'an, the Legend of Bahira, and the work of Abu Qurrah.[104] Yet an early hypothesis from the given earliest sources, albeit non-Islamic ones, indicates a lack of precision on both the number of rivers in paradise, and the types of rivers to be found there as John purported the Muslims of his time expounded. It thus seems possible that the number of rivers and kinds of rivers was not yet fixed in the Islamic tradition and that different traditions expressed themselves in different places.

The Monk and an-Nasara

In the history of Eastern Christian polemics against Islam, and indeed running right up to the present day in the Middle East, a tradition persists that Muhammad learned a great deal of his theology from a Christian monk. This tradition, although dismissed by some as a fabricated rhetorical device, should be considered seriously. Even if the story is a fabrication, it nevertheless informs us about seventh- and eighth-century conceptions regarding the development of Islam, as well as the Christians and Muslims who held those conceptions.[105] This monk is often given the name 'Bahira' in the sources, but sometimes 'Sergius', and sometimes even 'Sergius Bahira', something perhaps the result of a translational misunderstanding made between Syriac-speaking Christians, and Arabic-speaking Muslims.[106] Further reason the monk may

104 Although this is by no means guaranteed. See for example, Agapius, who, although a Melkite Christian fluent in Arabic, wrote a chronicle in Arabic in the 10th century in which he writes of the rivers of wine, milk, and honey. This is perhaps not surprising as he is similarly dependent on Theophilus for the years 630–754. One might be tempted to ask how Agapius, with his knowledge of Arabic and proximity to Muslims, writing as late as he did, could have made this mistake, but it should be remembered that it was common for those reproducing material from earlier chronicles to simply copy what was before them often without emendation. At the same time, Agapius' chronicle cannot have been too inaccurate, as it apparently attracted praise from Mas'udi (d. 956). See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, p. 404 and 41 for references.

105 On the monk, and some of the more recent scholarship summarizing earlier work, see S. H. Griffith, 'Muhammad and the Monk Bahira: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times', *Oriens Christianus* 79 (1995), pp. 146–74. For an example of one view that dismissed the story as unverifiable legend, see Crone, *Meccan Trade*, p. 220.

106 A book recently published on the monk Bahīrā will prove an invaluable contribution on the monk. Here I refer to the doctoral thesis by B. Roggema, 'The Legend of Sergius Bahīrā: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam', Ph.D. dissertation (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2007). For a good discussion of the possibility of Muslims taking the name from Christians, or just as likely vice versa, see pp. 51–53.

be of importance is that he appears not only in Christian polemical sources designed to repudiate Islam, but also in early Islamic ones, as someone who recognized Muhammad's prophetic status, sometimes in his childhood, but sometimes just before he begins his prophecies.[107] The monk appears, for example, in the very earliest Muslim biography of Muhammad, by Ibn Ishaq (d.c. 767).[108] Here the monk serves as a hermit supporting claims to the new faith, as opposed to a witness against them.

John, however, refers specifically to an Arian monk, and it has been argued that John's reference to Arianism was likely a rhetorical device he used in order to discredit Muhammad, as it is improbable that the person who influenced Muhammad's Christology held Arian beliefs.[109] Arianism was a fourth-century heresy teaching that there was a time before which Christ did not exist, effectively disputing orthodox teaching that he was God who existed from all ages.[110] The theological connection between Muhammad's Christology and Arian Christology is quite apparent, as both make Christ someone less than God. The rationale behind the argument that the one did not influence the other is that Arianism must not have been widely understood or practiced in the regions of Arabia at the time when Muhammad lived.[111] Additionally, as it was common to engage in the practice of identifying new heresies with older ones to discredit them in order to educate one's audience theologically, it is argued that John was similarly engaged in this rhetorical practice.[112] Associating

107 For a good summary of the Islamic sources, and for other traditions involving Muhammad's companions see U. Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the early Muslims* (Darwin Press, 1995), pp. 44–55.

108 See Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 80.

109 See J. V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 52.

110 Sources for the period regarding Arius come largely from his accusers, most of his own writings having been destroyed. This has led scholars to certain difficulties in discovering Arius and his followers' true beliefs. See R. Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (Darton Longman and Todd, 1987) and Gwynn, *The Eusebians*, pp. 1–13.

111 Wiles charts what he considers the end of Arianism within the boundaries of the Empire to the beginning of the fifth century. M. F. Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism Through the Centuries* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 27–34. It is entirely likely that scholars have simply extrapolated from this that Arianism did not persist anywhere in the east after this time. For one example see Roggema, 'The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā', p. 137, who takes for granted that Arianism was "no longer an existing sect in the seventh century" without qualification.

112 The argument that later heresies, such as Islam, were often discredited by theologians through painting them with the brush of earlier heresies is well known. See Cameron, 'How to Read Heresiology', p. 477.

new heresies with old theological ideas helped explain the content of new heretics' thought, and simultaneously condemned the new heresy by association.[113] Arianism was regularly used in this regard, and John may not be an exception.[114]

While these arguments should be taken into consideration as *modi operandi* for our author, they need not be definitive evidence, and there is reason to give them doubt and to postulate alternatively that John really did think that Muhammad's educator was an Arian. Scholars are in wide disagreement over what kind of Christians lived in Arabia at Muhammad's time, and who among them may have influenced early Islamic theology. Some have argued that the term the Qur'an uses for Christians, *al-Nasara*, must refer to the heresiological group referred to in Greek Christian works, such as that of Epiphanius, called the Nazoreans.[115] This is the view most recently put forth by François de Blois in an article detailing the Qur'an's use of the term.[116] Against this view it is often held that the etymological root of the term is of Syriac derivation, whose Arabic form is used in the Qur'an to refer generically to Christians as supporters of Jesus, or people coming from Jesus' home town of Nazareth.[117] Given the wide range of meanings the term came to connote, however, the etymology of the term is of little use in determining the specific kind of follower of Jesus who might be meant in the Qur'an, and the scholar must look elsewhere to argue his specific case regarding who these people were and what they believed.

While accepting the usual etymology of *al-Nasara* offered above, Sidney Griffith opposes the idea that the *Nasara* in the Qur'an are coincident with the Christian heresy.[118] Instead, in several places he argues for the view that Syriac Monophysites were the primary group influencing Islamic theology, and

113 Wiles outlines some examples. Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy*, pp. 26–30. For an example of the practice contemporary with, and post-dating John of Damascus, see Gwynn, 'From Iconoclasm to Arianism', pp. 225–51.

114 Sahas argues that John identifies the monk as Arian in order to 'identify the source and to explain Muhammad's theology'. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 73.

115 See for example, Holl (ed.), *Ancoratus und Panarion*, pp. 321–33; Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, pp. 112–19. This group is not to be confused with the Nasaraeans, the Jewish sect. See Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, pp. 42–44, for that group in Epiphanius' heresiology.

116 F. D. Blois, 'Nasrānī (ναζωραιος) and hanīf (εθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam', *BSOAS* 65.1 (2002), pp. 1–30.

117 The initial etymological study done of the term was made in J. Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen* (Walter de Gruyter, 1926), pp. 144–46. See also A. S. Tritton, 'Nasārā', *EI*² vol. 6, pp. 848–51.

118 See Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 7–8.

therefore the group to whom the Qur'an refers.[119] Griffith has already intimated that this is his view in other places, on the basis that Monophysite Christians referred to Mary as the 'Mother of God' (θεοτόκος). He has argued that since we find arguments against Mary as a God in the Qur'an, the author of the Qur'an must have thought that Monophysites believed that Mary was a god.[120]

Some evidence suggests, however, that there were heretical Christian groups living among the Arabs in Arabia prior to the time of Muhammad, and no one has attempted to identify precisely the confessional makeup of these.[121] Scholars have preferred to see the Christians living in Arabia in Muhammad's time to more or less be represented by the existing Christian groups within the borders of the Empire and/or the larger Christian sects well known in Persia, such as the Church of the East. However, this is a flawed extrapolation, primarily because imperial authority often regulated the forms of Christianity present within the borders of the empire, while it could not do so outside those borders, making variant forms more likely. Epiphanius mentions several heresies in his heresiology which appear to hold beliefs similar to those found among Muslims, one of which was Arianism. But there were others, some which he explicitly states are to be found in Arabia. The Collyridians, for example, were heretics who offered to Mary a kind of worship, and unlike several of Epiphanius' other heresies, according to him they appear to have been active in Arabia at the time of his writing in 377, as he speaks of them in a present

119 See S. H. Griffith, 'Syriacisms in the "Arabic Qur'an": Who Were "Those Who Said 'Allah is third of three' according to Al-Ma'ida 73?', in M. M. Bar-Asher, B. Chiesa, and S. Hopkins (eds.), *A Word Fitly Spoken: Studies in Mediaeval Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an, Presented to Haggai Ben-Shammai* (Brill and Ben Zvi-Institute, 2007), pp. 83–110 and 'Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'ān: The "Companions of the Cave" in *Sūrat al-Kahf'* in Reynolds (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*, pp. 109–38. In fact, Griffith has already made this argument in other places, with differently presented evidence. See below.

120 Griffith, 'Anastasios of Sinai' and to which we referred and discussed above in chapter 3.

121 See for example, Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, pp. 278–79, who covers the material in Epiphanius and Eusebius, and explains how the phrase *Arabia haeresium ferax*, or 'Arabia, the breeding ground of heresies', eventually came to be applied to Arabs in general, and not just those found in Transjordan. Shahid, unfortunately, also makes the observation that John of Damascus could see nothing in Islam other than another 'Christian heresy', as its adherents were Arabs, who had by his time fully achieved the reputation for heresy above. See R. W. Smith, '"Arabia Haeresium Ferax?" A History of Christianity in the Transjordan to 395 C.E.' (Miami University, 1994) (unpublished Ph.D.) for the view that the Transjordan enjoyed an equal degree of orthodoxy in the period, and that its reputation as the seat of heresy was ultimately undeserved.

context.[122] Although another two hundred years would pass before the coming of Muhammad, the fact that this was the only heresy in his book which attributed worship to Mary and which he also locates in Arabia suggests more than coincidence. John of Damascus, of course, recapitulated the heresy in his own work without Epiphanius' extended commentary.[123]

Additionally, we have the evidence of early *ḥadīths* which provide invaluable evidence for the forms of Christianity to which early Muslims were reacting. Revisionists tend to doubt that there are any *ḥadīth* identifiably earlier than the eighth century, and regard collections of the eighth century as valuable evidence for what people thought in eighth-century, but not as evidence for how they did in the seventh. However, many varying beliefs found in eighth-century *ḥadīth* collections are reflected in apocryphal Christian Gospels from earlier periods, or at least oral traditions which appear coincident with material in those gospels.[124] We also now have epigraphic evidence, from the numerous

---

122 Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80*, pp. 475–84; Williams (trans.), *The Panarion II*, pp. 620–29. Although the term 'Arabia' in the fourth century often extended into Syria and present-day Jordan, Epiphanius' use of the term is often quite specific, and he will use the terms 'Syria', 'Palestine', and 'Arabia Felix' as designations, although it may be that he is referring to Sinai when he refers to 'Arabia'. For the view that the Collyridians did not in fact worship Mary as a goddess, but offered to her a kind of worship similar to early veneration of the saints, see S. Shoemaker, 'Epiphanius of Salamis, the Kollyridians, and the Early Dormition Narratives: The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century', *JECS* 16.3 (2008), pp. 371–401. Shoemaker does, against Cameron, show that the descriptions of Marian rituals found in Epiphanius are likely accurate, and can be found in other sources of the fourth century. The case is not especially relevant here, as I wish only to point out that other groups said to be active in Arabia offered to Mary a kind of worship which might well have been the subject of Muhammad's criticism. Interestingly, Shoemaker attempts to tie the practices Epiphanius describes to the 'Six Books Apocryphon', a collection of early works describing Mary's Dormition and Assumption. Shoemaker shows that manuscripts transmitting these traditions run for several centuries after Epiphanius has written, and in Syriac and Arabic versions, adding further credence to our point that such groups may have been active at the time Muhammad is writing. For two examples of works which build on the view that the Collyridians were in fact offering to Mary worship as a goddess, see G. Ashe, *The Virgin: Mary's Cult and the Re-emergence of the Goddess* (Arkana, 1988), pp. 149–71, and more generally S. Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian roots of Mariology* (Brill, 1993).

123 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 60, ln. 13.

124 T. Khalidi (ed.), *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 9–17. See also D. Cook, 'New Testament Citations in the Hadith Literature and the Question of Early Gospel Translations into Arabic', in E. Grypeou, M. Swanson, and D. Thomas (eds.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Brill, 2006), pp. 185–223, at 186–88.

inscriptions from the first two centuries of Islam found in the deserts of Syria-Palestine, some of which speak to the person of Jesus, but few of Mary, and the overwhelming majority referring to God alone.[125] Some of these are also found in the Qur'an, and in Arabic inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, not to mention on coins.[126] Some of these witnesses speak to a form of Christianity which considered Mary a god, but far greater concern is shown for the place of the person Jesus and the status of the Trinity. This contributes to the view that while mainline denominations of Christianity such as the Melkites, Nestorians, and Jacobites were dominant—as they certainly were—there is also good evidence to suggest that fringe sects also existed side by side these in Arabia. Once out of Arabia and within regions once controlled by imperial authority, however, Muslims would have had more contact with the larger Christian groups, which at various times received imperial support, and were more dominant in Syria and Palestine, than in Arabia.[127]

Further, as discussed in chapter 3, to argue that Muhammad must have been reacting to Monophysite Christianity in the Qur'an because Monophysite Christians refer to Mary as the Mother of God assumes that Muhammad completely misunderstood the Christians around him, since Monophysite Christians never considered Mary a god. While it is possible to argue Muhammad was laboring under this misunderstanding, I suggest that there seems to be no reason to postulate a developed Monophysite Christianity in Arabia to which the early Muslims and Muhammad in particular were responding.[128] As argued here above and in the last chapter, it is more plausible to suppose that early Muslims in Syria and Palestine took issue with what they believed was belief in two gods, but namely Jesus and His Father.

Irfan Shahid, for his part, neither accepts the view that *al-Nasara* were the heresiological group under consideration in the Qur'an nor shares Griffith's view that the Christians to whom the Qur'an refers were Syriac Monophysites.

125 R. Hoyland, 'The Content and Context of Early Arabic Inscriptions', *JSAI* 17 (1997), pp. 77–102.

126 Inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock are collected in Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, pp. 696–99.

127 It was standard imperial policy to exile Christians who were viewed as heretics. Although at different times each of these three mainline Christian groups were also considered 'heretical', at other times at least the Jacobites received imperial sanction, and their presence within the empire often tolerated.

128 I am aware of course, that several scholars hold the view that Islam developed somewhere north of central Arabia, closer to where faithful adherents would have had more contact with Syriac speakers. I also accept the potential influence of the Christians of Najran, who clearly were of Monophysite background, but which I contend below are a separate case.

He offers the third idea that these Christians were of Ethiopic descent and part of the Christian *oikoumene* in the seventh century.[129] At the same time, he has argued elsewhere for the possibility that Arianism may still have been present in Arabia during Muhammad's lifetime. Shahid shows that the Emperor Constantius (317–61), an Arian, fostered a mission to South Arabia which succeeded in founding three churches.[130] Although lacking evidence, Shahid suggests the possibility that Arianism survived in the East until the seventh century, as it did in Western Europe among the Goths. This is certainly possible, especially given the emperor's lack of reach to exert his theological position in areas not within the Empire's boundaries.

Yet another approach to the Qur'an's terminology for Christians renders much of the above arguments moot; the Qur'an's use of the term itself may not be consistent. Assigning religious affiliation to particular Christians found in the Qur'an runs into the argument that at least those Christians supportive of Muhammad's message found in the Qur'an are not of a specific church, but rather a literary construct designed to suit the rhetorical purposes of the author. Analyzing both the Qur'an and the Arabic exegetical literature (*tafsīr*), McAuliffe has argued that the Christians in the Qur'an—particularly those supportive of what the Qur'an considers 'true' Christianity—are "neither the historical nor the living community of people who call themselves Christians. As a conceptual idealization, the notion of Qurānic Christians bears very little relation to present or past sociological configurations of the Christian community."[131] McAuliffe does not analyze in her book the *Nasara* of whom the Qur'an speaks more critically, but she does show in another article that any attempt to lay upon the *Nasara* a monolithically positive or negative connotation with its accompanying theological implications fails upon closer scrutiny.[132] Her assessment implicitly calls into question the approaches of Griffith, Shahid and De Blois.

---

129 These Christians would also have held 'Monophysite' theology of a kind, but I regard the point as minor since Shahid differs on the Christian source of Islam, the Ethiopic expression of which was certainly different from the heavily Hellenized Syriac one. They may even have held the Aphthartodocetic theology of Julian of Halicarnassus (d. after 527). I. Shahid, 'Islam and *Oriens Christianius*: Makka 610–622 AD', in E. Grypeou (ed.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Brill, 2006), pp. 9–31, at 23.

130 Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, pp. 86–106.

131 J. D. McAuliffe, *Qur'ānic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 287.

132 J. D. McAuliffe, 'Christians in the Qur'ān and Tafsīr', in J. J. Waardenburg (ed.), *Muslim Perceptions of other Religions: A Historical Survey* (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 105–21.

If McAuliffe's argument regarding Qur'anic terminology is accepted, we are left once again with the need to trust non-Islamic sources for our understanding of Islamic development, and to reconsider the possibility that John of Damascus actually did believe an Arian monk influenced Muhammad's thought. This view has not been expressed by many, but it is as plausible as the alternative theories advanced so far. Clearly a rumor did circulate throughout Syria in both Christian and Muslim circles that Muhammad had had direct contact with a monk. That the proliferation of various traditions regarding the nature of the exchange and the confessional identiy of the monk should be immediate cause for rejecting all traditions, as some have suggested, is not clear.[133] While it is true that on the one hand traditions circulated in which Muhammad learned from an Arian, while on the other hand traditions circulated in which Muhammad learned from a monk, the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. John may have been aware that Arianism was spread in Arabia in the fourth century, and he may have extrapolated that many monks in the region were Arians. Or, he may have combined the two traditions—that Muhammad was taught by an Arian, and that Muhammad was taught by a monk—concluding that Muhammad learned from an Arian monk. In either case such an understanding would have been perfectly reasonable and realistic.

Female Circumcision

John of Damascus mentions female circumcision only in passing at the end of his treatise on Islam, as one of several injunctions laid down by Muhammad for the Ishmaelites. Concluding the work, John writes,

> Τούτους περιτέμνεσθαι σὺν γυναιξὶ νομοθετήσας καὶ μήτε σαββατίζειν μήτε βαπτίζεσθαι προστάξας, τὰ μὲν τῶν ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ἀπηγορευμένων ἐσθίειν, τῶν δὲ ἀπέχεσθαι παραδούς· οἰνοποσίαν δὲ παντελῶς ἀπηγόρευσεν.
>
> Having made a law that they and the women be circumcised, he also commanded them neither to observe the Sabbath, nor to be baptized, and to eat things forbidden by the Law but, on the other hand, to abstain

133 Such is Crone's view of at least the Islamic versions. Crone, *Meccan Trade*, p. 220. It should be added that it is rare for the Islamic sources to identify the confession of the monk in question.

> from other things which the law permits; he also forbade drinking of wine completely.[134]

Yet John's ascription of the injunction to Muhammad specifically is significant. By doing so he became one of only two Christian authors from Islam's early period to mention female circumcision as something prescribed by Muhammad for the benefit of his followers.[135] The only other source to do so is the Leo-ʿUmar correspondence which, as we have seen, is unlikely to have been a source for John's work, in that it probably post-dates John, and appears to represent somewhat different traditions. Other Christian sources mention circumcision in connection with the Arabs who had recently conquered them, and their witness does not preclude the possibility that they were referring to circumcision of both men and women.[136] But as it is clear that at least some of those Christians associated the practice with Judaism, it seems unlikely that they had women in mind when writing.[137] Thus, John's work appears to be a rarity among Christian works written in Syriac, Greek, and Arabic in presenting us with this tradition as coming from Muhammad. Given these circumstances we might question whether the practice's inclusion in John's treatise is indicative of a poorly informed source.

That circumcision was a part of early Islam, at least for men, is well established. The practice of circumcision in Arabia in the pre-Islamic period is attested to in Arabic poetry, and in authors such as Epiphanius of Salamis and Josephus.[138] It is not addressed in the Qur'an itself, and for this reason it is sometimes argued that it was not instituted by Muhammad, but was rather a carry over of a pre-Islamic practice that was adopted as part of the faith.[139]

134 Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 67, ln. 153–56.

135 Later Christians would sometimes copy John's text and include it in their own description of Islam. See for example, Euthymius Zigabenus, who, repeating John of Damascus, has it that Muhammad instituted female circumcision. (PG 130.1352D). As far as I know the Leo-Umar correspondence is the only other independent Christian source for this tradition, whether in Syriac, Arabic, or Greek.

136 See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, p. 470 for examples.

137 See A.-M. Saadi, 'Nascent Islam in the Seventh Century Syriac Sources', in G. S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Qurʾān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 217–22 for the view that the conquering Arabs were largely seen as monotheists with a Jewish precedent sent to punish the Christians for their sins.

138 See A. J. Wensinck, 'Khitan', *EI*^{2} vol. 5, p. 20. For Epiphanius, see Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64*, pp. 379–80; Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 150.

139 Sometimes Sura 2:124 is adduced as a justification for circumcision, as one of God's commandments to Abraham was circumcision of males. See Rubin, 'Hanifiyya and Kaʿba' and

Circumcision was required in Judaism, which it has been argued exerted significant influence over Islam, but it remains difficult to argue that female circumcision among Muslims is a product of that influence.[140] Under the Judaic covenant, only men are circumcised, and in that faith it does not appear to have been practiced among women.[141] In the Old Testament, God commands all those born of the seed of Abraham to be circumcised, as well as those men or boys who are bought with money but are not of the seed of Abraham. God instructs Abraham that any male child whose foreskin is not circumcised shall be cut off from his people, as having broken God's covenant.[142] No provision is made for female circumcision. Further, argument has been had over whether circumcision in either gender was adopted by the early Islamic community as a result of, or in spite of its relationship to Judaism, and whether that adoption came early or late in the Islamic tradition. Kister and Rubin have argued that circumcision became a part of early Islamic practice as it was a part of what was perceived as the right practice of Abraham or *sunan Ibrāhīm*.[143] Against this view, Kathryn Kueny has argued that whether or not later Islamic jurists (on whom Kister and Rubin base themselves) linked the practice of circumcision to Abrahamic commandments, circumcision in the Islamic tradition

M. J. Kister, "'… and he was born circumcised …": some notes on circumcision in hadith', *Oriens* 34 (1994), pp. 10–30 for two examples of where circumcision is simply an example of a practice deemed by the Islamic community to have been a a part of the *sunan Ibrahim* that existed prior to Muhammad's coming.

140 For example, see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, pp. 11–12. Crone and Cook claim that circumcision, together with sacrifice, became two pillars of Islam, although they do not appear to address the specific issue of female circumcision and it is not clear if they understand female circumcision to fall under the general use of the term.

141 Genesis 17:10–14. For female circumcision and Judaism, see M. Carol, 'Clitoridectomy', *ER* 3 (2005), pp. 1824–26 and J. Seidel, J. Baskin, and L. Snowman, 'Circumcision', *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 4 (2007), pp. 730–35. Al-Jahiz (781–c. 868), an early Muslim scholar, comments that the practice of both sexes being circumcised was continuous from the time of Abraham and Hagar to his time. See M. J. Kister, "'… and he was born circumcised …'", p. 18 and Rubin, 'Hanifiyya and Kaʿba', pp. 99–100. For obvious reasons, data is difficult to collect on whether Jews in Arabia, possibly under the influence of the 'Ishmaelites', may also have practiced circumcision. Sources referring to circumcision are generally gender neutral or masculine, and this would lead one to incline toward the view that only the men practiced circumcision in accordance with Jewish practice. Al-Jahiz would have been referring to those whom he saw as being in tradition with Abraham, while the traditional Jewish sources testify to practices sanctioned by the Jewish scholars and Rabbis.

142 Genesis 17:14.

143 See Kister, "'… and he was born circumcised …'" and Rubin, 'Hanifiyya and Kaʿba'.

should be seen as much as a departure from the Jewish tradition as it is a product of it.[144] She points first to its absence from the Qur'an, and then to the great variety of approaches to circumcision in the early Islamic sources to argue that it was not commonly or uniformly practiced among the Arabs in Muhammad's time. She further notes that when the practice is mentioned, it is rare to see it in the context of Abrahamic injunctions, but is nearly always treated apart from discussions on the religion of Abraham.[145]

Thus, even if men were circumcised in pre-Islamic Arabia as a part of pagan practice (or, depending on one's viewpoint as a part of the faith of Abraham whose adherents had fallen away), the sources do not make clear if women were similarly circumcised. Epiphanius of Salamis says that the Saracens, also called Ishmaelites, practiced circumcision during his time, but that they do this "not because of the Law, but from some senseless custom."[146] As with most sources, it is not clear if Epiphanius is referring to men only, or to men and women, and given his own Judeo-Christian background we should be inclined to assume the former. Anver Giladi has recently suggested that female circumcision evolved in the Arabian Peninsula only later, and was not widespread in pre-Islamic Arabia. He has argued that the practice of female circumcision received some legitimacy from the Copts, who said it came from Abraham.[147] There is also some limited evidence which testifies to the practice of female circumcision in ancient Egypt. Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BC–50 AD) reports that "the Egyptians, in accordance with the national customs of their country, in the fourteenth year of their age, when the male begins to have the power of propagating his species, and when the female arrives at the age of puberty, circumcise both bride and bridegroom."[148] It would seem, therefore, that at least in Egypt female circumcision was a part of the local customs. At the same time, as far as one can see, the practice of female circumcision does not appear to have been practiced by the pre-Islamic Arabs of Arabia. It is not mentioned in the earliest biography (*sīra*) of the prophet, written by Ibn Ishaq. In that text, the pre-Islamic people of the Quraysh, living in the Hijaz, are said to bring their

144 K. Kueny, 'Abraham's Test: Islamic Male Circumcision as Anti/Ante-Covenental Practice', in J. C. Reeves (ed.), *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality* (Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 161–82.

145 Kueny, 'Abraham's Test', pp. 169–72.

146 Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64*, pp. 379–80; Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, p. 150.

147 A. Giladi, 'Normative Islam vs. Local Tradition: Some Observations on Female Circumcision with Special Reference to Egypt', *Arabica* 44 (1997), pp. 254–67, at 261.

148 *Quaestiones et solutions on Genesis* 3.47, quoted from C. D. Yonge (ed.), *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (New edn., Hendrickson, 1993), p. 857.

sons to Hubal, a principal idol in the Kaʿba, before they were circumcised.[149] No mention is made, however, of female circumcision and what provision was made for this, if any, and as we have already noted, no other source appears to mention the practice in the pre-Islamic period.

By contrast, we have reports from different kinds of sources that female circumcision was practiced in the early Islamic period in Arabia. Indeed, mention is made by Ibn Ishaq in his biography of the Prophet that a man named Hamza, called the "best helper to God's prophet", is seen killing a woman whose occupation is a "female circumciser".[150] This takes place in the context of a number of killings, in which the profession of the victim is mentioned as an identifying attribute. Further evidence is found in the *ḥadīth* literature, in which we find support for John's claim that the practice originated with Muhammad himself. The most frequently cited *ḥadīth* dealing with female circumcision recounts the story of Muhammad's meeting with a woman whose occupation it was to perform the function. The woman, variously called Umm Atiyya, Umm Habiba, Umm Habib, or Umm Tiba, was responsible for circumcising female slaves. According to one narration, this woman was part of a group who emigrated with Muhammad from Mecca. Seeing her, Muhammad asked if she kept practicing her profession. When she answered yes, Muhammad taught her the proper way to perform the act so as not to circumcise too much of the clitoris.[151] Another *ḥadīth*, recorded by Malik ibn Anas, explains the need for ablutions to be performed when two circumcised parts touch.[152] Malik's citations seem to take for granted the practice of female circumcision, and he does not comment on how or where this practice first materialized. Another early *ḥadīth* collection, that of Abu Dawud (d. 889), has Muhammad teaching a woman how to perform the operation, and warning not to cut too deeply in performing it.[153] Jawwad Ali has claimed that female circumcision was widespread among the Arabs of Muhammad's time, particularly among the people of Mecca. The son of a woman who performed female circumcision was pejoratively referred to as "son of a clitoris-cutter."[154] Other examples could be adduced, but these

149 Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 67.

150 Ibid., p. 375.

151 S. A. A. Abu-Sahlieh, 'Muslims' Genitalia in the Hands of the Clergy: Religious Arguments about Male and Female Circumcision', in G. C. Denniston, F. M. Hodges, and M. F. Milos (eds.), *Male and Female Circumcision: Medical, Legal, and Ethical Considerations in Pediatric Practice* (Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 1999), pp. 131–72, at 148.

152 Bewley (ed.), *Al-Muwatta' of Imam Malik*, p. 16.

153 A. Hasan (ed.), *Sunan Abu Dawud* (Al-Madina Publications, 1985) book 41, number 5251.

154 Cited in Abu-Sahlieh, 'Muslims' Genitalia in the Hands of the Clergy', p. 136. This might be taken to understand that the practice was not an honorable one, but other sources speak

should be suffice to show that the earliest material we have from the Islamic tradition, apart from the Qur'an, also witnesses to the practice of female circumcision and at least Muhammad's close association with it, if not his institution of it.

Female circumcision was practiced as a part of Islam at least in some regions, and for this reason John's testimony to early Islamic practice should be more carefully considered.[155] Further study of the Islamic sources for the extent to which the practice was ascribed to Muhammad would further aid our understanding. Was female circumcision prescribed by Muhammad in the earliest days of Islam and later excised from the tradition or was female circumcision simply reported in some *isnads* and *ḥadīth* as having originated with the prophet even if it did not? John's claim that the practice was introduced by Muhammad is not implausible, especially given Abu Dawud's *ḥadīth* that Muhammad himself was directly involved in teaching the careful practice of it.

Pillars of Faith

As a final note to this chapter, let us briefly consider one perhaps anachronistic criticism made of John's text which, although made on the basis of negative evidence, serves as a useful illustration for the making of such claims in general. This is the criticism made against John that he appears to have been unacquainted with certain aspects of Islam, such as the five pillars of Islam, since he mentions them nowhere in his text. Most recently Raymond Le Coz, in his book, wrote that the five pillars were an essential element in being part of the Islamic community, and he attempts to excuse John's lack of attention to them by arguing that John was forced to make a choice in what he presented to his readers, and so focused on that material most important to Christians.[156]

The five pillars of Islam are: (1) the profession of faith, *shahādah*, (2) pilgrimage, *hajj*, (3) ritual prayer, *ṣalāt*, (4) fasting in Ramadan, *ṣawm*, and (5) almsgiving, *zakāt*, *ṣadaka*. These five 'pillars' (*arkān*) are considered to "have

otherwise, and in some medieval Muslim societies the son of an uncircumcised woman sometimes became the subject of humiliation. Khalid ibn Abdallah al-Qasri (d.c. 743), the governor of the Umayyads of Mecca, and later Iraq, is said to have forced his Christian mother to undergo circumcision in order to put an end to the insults he suffered because of her. See Giladi, 'Normative Islam vs. Local Tradition', p. 263.

155 Giladi, 'Normative Islam vs. Local Tradition'.

156 Le Coz (ed.), *Ecrits Sur Islam*, p. 133.

become isolated in Muslim thought as a significant summary of Muslim life."[157] It is common today to find this list in almost any Islamic sources, and they are taken for granted by the modern Muslim as duties instituted by Muhammad.

But here again questions have been raised regarding these chief duties, or 'pillars', and where and when they were first identified as part of the Islamic tradition. It is not known when the Arabic word '*arkān*' (pillars) came to denote the five duties, nor how early is the tradition of these five duties being superior to the many others found in Islamic tradition. To date, no historical study appears to have been conducted regarding when the duties came to be identified with the Arabic word now applied to them, but the word now associated with them, *arkān*, was not originally used in association with the five as such.[158]

Wilfred Cantwell Smith has argued that the term *arkān* probably originally referred to limbs of the body, and he has documented several ninth-century uses of the term in which this would appear to be the primary meaning intended by the author.[159] The basic root of the word, '*rukn*', signifies something upon which something else rests, or in classical use it can denote the strongest side of a thing.[160] As we have already seen, use was made of it in this way to refer to the Black Stone, or the corner of the Kaʿba in which the Black Stone rests.[161] Smith argues that the phrase *wa-ʿamal bi-al-arkān*, often used as part of a tripartite definition of faith used in early Islamic texts on discussions of what constituted faith, was understood as "works of the limbs" [of the body],

157 A. Rippin and J. Knappert, *Textual Sources for the study of Islam* (Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 10. For some Muslims these five pillars are considered 'obligatory', insofar as one wishes to remain a good Muslim. Traditions differ concerning the addition of a sixth pillar, known as perpetual warfare against infidels. See S. N. Haq, 'Rukn', in *EI*^{2} vol. 8, pp. 596–97. Traditions also differ regarding the meaning and practice of the above, for example the pilgrimage location, the number of times pilgrimage should be undertaken in a lifetime, etc. The point here, however, as will become evident, is the identification of these duties as 'pillars'.

158 While extensive sources are available describing the five pillars, and how they fit into Muslim practice, neither the Encyclopaedia of Islam, nor digital databases such as Index Islamicus were able to offer any reference material for a study of how and when the Pillars developed. Smith, whose article I have used here, wrote that he had not seen any historical study on the rise of the term *al-arkān* to designate the five pillars, and awaited the entry in the new edition of *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, which sadly did not provide the information for which he hoped.

159 W. C. Smith, 'Arkān', in D. P. Little (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Civilization presented to Niyazi Berkes* (Brill, 1976), pp. 303–16.

160 Ibid., p. 307.

161 See above in the present chapter.

before it was understood to signify the "works of the pillars", as now commonly understood. He argues that the aspect of the current Muslim understanding that faith involves works is a result of the Kharijite movement of the eighth century and its consequent impact on Muslim understanding that faith was either an internal matter or one which involved the recitation of beliefs. The understanding that bodily acts were a part of the faith developed in Islam, and was not clearly accepted from the beginning. He shows that early texts often use the term *al-jawāriḥ* as a synonyum for *al-arkān*, in discussions of faith and works. But, as *jawāriḥ* is a word which means "limbs of the body", and not identified with the pillars, he suggests that it was not until sometime following the classical and medieval Islamic period that Muslim jurists associated *arkān* with the "pillars of faith", as they are known today.[162] The substitution from *jawāriḥ* to *arkān* was made by authors in order to facilitate rhyme scheme, and was not intended to alter the theological understanding that Muslim faith required acts of the body, rather than fulfilling specifically the five pillars as understood today.[163]

Smith's conclusions do not show that it is impossible for the five duties to have existed as a distinct group prior to the terminological revolution he assesses, only that they were not referred to as 'pillars'. At the same time, he points out that well-known *ḥadīth* often extend works of the body to a far greater number than five.[164] Collections of *ḥadīth* as early as the ninth century sometimes identify five fundamental duties in Islam, and it is claimed that these appear in a clear way in the Qur'an. Both the *Sahīh* of al-Bukhari (810–870) and that of Muslim (818–875) list the five as those found above.[165] It is notable, however, that the five do not appear in any systematic way in the Qur'an, nor for that matter in the *Muwatta'* of Malik ibn Anas, or in Ibn Ishaq's biography.

Criticism of John of Damascus and his lack of knowledge concerning Islam should be founded on the principle that such knowledge was demonstrably available to another person contemporary to the Damascene, and that is not possible in the case of the five pillars. Again, since there appears to be no evidence supporting the conclusion that the five pillars of Islam were widely

162 In fact Smith argues that the term can be understood this way even today, although this occurs more rarely.

163 Smith, 'Arkān', pp. 308–12.

164 Smith offers one example of a *ḥadīth* according to which there are at least seventy parts to faith, the highest of which is proclaiming the *shahādah*. See Smith, 'Arkān', pp. 310–11.

165 They appear as a list in M. M. Khan (ed.), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahīh al-Bukhārī* (Dar al-'Arabiyah, 1985) vol. 1, book 2. In Sahih Muslim while they do not appear as a list specifically, the five are focused on more than various other works.

identifiable as such, and indeed given the evidence that at the very least the terminology of the pillars was not established, there is no reason to suppose that John does not accurately report on Islam as it was being practiced in his time. At the very least there is no reason to assign blame or criticism of John's knowledge of Islam on the basis that he is 'unaware', or paid insufficient attention to, the five pillars.

Having seen now how several para-Islamic and Islamic traditions were viewed by John, and how these traditions might have been understood as 'Islamic' by Muslims of the first two centuries AH, let us turn now to some interesting later evidence which might help us better situate John's work in its theological and historical context. Theodore Abu Qurrah has been the recipient of a considerable amount of scholarly attention lately, and being John's immediate theological successor, he has much to offer us if we compare his perspective of Islam to John's.

CHAPTER 5

John of Damascus and Theodore Abu Qurrah on Islam

A greater understanding of the quality of knowledge about Islam and how that knowledge of Islam advanced among the Chalcedonian communities of Syro-Palestine can be acquired by comparing John of Damascus' work on Islam with a corpus of writings on Islam usually attributed to Theodore Abu Qurrah (c. 750–830), a theologian bishop working approximately fifty to seventy years after John. Although there is much still unknown about Theodore, certain parts of his biography have been improved upon, and we now possess a better understanding of which works are ascribable to him.[1] For my purposes here, I shall restrict myself to the Greek corpus as much as possible, making reference to an English translation of his Arabic works when requisite, as at present we are in some ways in more certain territory with the current English translation than we are with the poor editions of his Arabic works, on which there is ongoing research.[2]

It is generally agreed that Theodore was a native of Edessa, born at the beginning of Abbasid rule (750–1258), and spent much of his life as the bishop of Harran. Theodore took a great deal of his theological knowledge from John, and until recently he was even thought to have been John's immediate spiritual descendent, in that the one was thought to have immediately preceded the

1 See S. H. Griffith, *Theodore Abu Qurrah: The Intellectual Profile of an Arab Christian writer of the First Abbasid century* (Tel Aviv University, 1992) and especially J. C. Lamoreaux, 'The Biography of Theodore Abu Qurrah Revisited', *DOP* 56 (2002), pp. 25–40, for Theodore's biography. Lamoreaux, however, removes as many answers that scholars had given about Theodore's life as he provides answers to questions posed. For a survey of Theodore's Arabic works, see S. H. Griffith, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah's Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images', *JAOS* 105.1 (1985), pp. 53–73. For the Greek corpus, see Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon'. By Abu Qurrah's own statement he also wrote in Syriac, but the work(s) have yet to be discovered. See K. Samir, 'Le traité sur les icônes d'Abū Qurrah mentionné par Eutychius', *OCP* 58 (1992), pp. 461–74, who argues that there is perhaps only one work in thirty chapters, rather than 30 works as has usually been thought.

2 Perhaps unusually, we are in the position today of probably having a better English version of Theodore's works than we do Arabic, thanks to John Lamoreaux's invaluable translation, which takes into account a number of manuscript witnesses for the Greek and Arabic works. Lamoreaux himself admits that we are still lacking good critical editions of Theodore's works, the Arabic on which he is working. Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, pp. xxv–xxxv.

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_007

other at the monastery of St. Sabas.[3] I have already discussed the limits of the evidence regarding John of Damascus' life and the probability that he retired to St. Sabas. It has also been argued that Theodore was not connected with St. Sabas, but was confused in the manuscript tradition with Theodore of Edessa.[4]

Yet even if it can be shown that neither spent time as monks at St. Sabas, severing John's influence on Theodore entirely is not possible, as the two were the product of the same environment, and there is evidence that demonstrates the bishop was familiar with John's works. Both theologians were clearly well educated representatives of Chalcedonian orthodoxy and both appear to have had strong ties to Jerusalem and the patriarch there. Several of Theodore's works have him visiting Jerusalem, and at least one of his Arabic works appears to have been translated into Greek at the order of Patriarch Thomas of Jerusalem (807–820) during Theodore's lifetime.[5] Further, the earliest reference to John of Damascus' *Fount of Knowledge* is found in a letter probably dating from the eighth century, written to one Leo, none other than the Syncellus of the Melkite bishop of Harran, "the position Theodore came to hold."[6] Van Roey has studied this apologetic letter, written in Syriac to the Syncellus, which mentions the *Fount of Knowledge* in what Louth has determined was its earliest form.[7] While it is not clear when exactly this syncellus lived, he lived in the

---

3 See for example, Griffith, *Theodore Abu Qurrah*. To some extent the idea that Theodore was either at, or closely associated with, St. Sabas has not been fully overturned, but scholars have taken aim at the claims that either John or Theodore was attached to St. Sabas. For the standard work linking the two, and for an analysis of John's influence over Theodore, see Dick, 'Un continuateur arabe de saint Jean Damascène'.

4 Lamoreaux, 'The Biography of Theodore'. Dr. Lamoreaux has informed me that there are a few dissenting voices to his piece, but little yet in writing. Lamoreaux has gone far in his assertions that evidence for all links between Theodore and St. Sabas have, as a result of his work, been severed, and suggests in his article that perhaps so might also be the case for his relationship with John. As discussed below, I regard such a divorce as unlikely given other evidence, and the similarity in their theological vision and the topics on which they wrote. For one such recent dissent arguing that Theodore was at St. Sabas, see D. Bertaina, 'An Arabic Account of Theodore Abu Qurra in Debate at the Court of Caliph al-Ma'mun: A Study in Early Christian and Muslim Literary Dialogues', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Catholic University of America, 2007), pp. 201–21.

5 PG 97.1504, Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 83.

6 The text does not make clear who the bishop was, although Theodore himself should not be precluded.

7 A. Van Roey, 'La Lettre apologétique d'Elie à Léon, syncelle l'évêque de chalcédonien de Harran; une apologie monophysite du VIIe–IXe siècle', *Le Muséon* 57 (1944), pp. 1–52. Van Roey, working under a false assumption, dated the letter to after 743, the date he associated with John's writing of the *Fount*. But as Louth has shown, and as I have addressed earlier, this

eighth century, and so either just before, or more probably during, Theodore's tenure.[8] This being the case, there can be little doubt that Theodore was familiar with John of Damascus' works, including his treatise on Islam at the end of the *De Haeresibus*.[9]

To fully appreciate Theodore's educational background, it is necessary to understand the significance that Harran had as a place of converging cultures. Located in the south of modern Turkey, near Edessa (Urfa), Harran became the short-lived capital of the Umayyad Caliphate not long before Theodore was born. The Caliph Marwan II (744–50), fearing his political opponents in Syria among the Kalb Arabs, and wishing to move closer to his military strength in Northern Mesopotamia, sought to strengthen his hold on power by transferring the seat of the Caliphate from Damascus to Harran.[10] The Sabians, adherents of an otherwise obscure pagan religion, had Harran as their focal point well into the tenth century.[11] Their place in the city insured the continued use of the Greek language among many of its inhabitants. But, being near Edessa, Syriac also had found great importance there, inasmuch as perhaps an equal number or even greater number of the inhabitants belonged to the Syriac-speaking Miaphysite Church.[12] Syriac inscriptions have been found there, and many of the local inhabitants spoke Syriac as their native language.[13] As for Arabic, there can be little doubt that moving the capital there would only have been possible with substantial numbers of Arabic speakers and writers,

---

date was based on a misunderstanding of the preface to John's work. See Louth, 'The Pege Gnoseos', pp. 335–36.

8 S. H. Griffith, "'Melkites", "Jacobites" and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-Century Syria', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Syrian Christians Under Islam: The First Thousand Years* (Brill, 2001), pp. 9–56, at 24–25.

9 Sidney Griffith has actively demonstrated some of the dependencies Theodore had on John's treatises on icons in Theodore's own composition on the subject. S. H. Griffith (ed.), *A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons by Theodore Abu Qurrah* (Peeters, 1997), pp. 13, 23–26, 44–45, 57.

10 G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate A.D. 661–750* (2nd edn., Routledge, 2000), pp. 98–103.

11 T. M. Green, *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran* (Brill, 1992). It does not seem to be known when exactly the Sabians ceased to exist as a group. See B. Dodge, 'The Sabians of Harran', in F. Sarruf and S. Tamim (eds.), *American University of Beirut Festival Book* (*Festschrift*) (American University of Beirut, 1967), pp. 59–85 for a short list of medieval authors who comment on them.

12 J. B. Segal, *Edessa: 'The Blessed City'* (Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 192.

13 J. B. Segal, 'Two Syriac Inscriptions from Harran', *BSOAS* 20 (1957), pp. 513–22.

of whom Theodore would become one.[14] Despite having no extant vita for Theodore, we can be fairly certain that the bishop of such a city would be in need of excellent linguistic, theological, and oratorical skills. Yet questions do remain regarding the languages in which Theodore primarily wrote, and the answer is by no means settled.

Problems Authenticating Abu Qurrah's Greek Corpus

It has traditionally been thought that Theodore wrote in all three of the languages used in Edessa: Greek, Arabic, and Syriac. At present, the view that the Greek corpus of works attributed to Theodore was composed in Greek is gradually being eroded. There are at least forty works in Greek attributed to Theodore, but it seems no more than thirty can possibly have been composed by him in Greek, and perhaps even fewer.[15] The observation was first made by Griffith, who has argued that such was the growth in the use of Arabic among the Melkite populations of Syro-Palestine that it was unlikely Theodore himself composed most of the works we now have under his name in Greek.[16] A potential problem with Griffith's argument, however, is the absence of all but one work which appears in both Arabic and Greek, which would seem an unusual rate of disappearance if the works were originally composed in Arabic or Syriac.[17]

Attempts have been made to argue that many, if not all, of the Greek works were not written by Theodore himself. Further clarity on the issue has been brought by Glei and Khoury in 1995, when they argued that Theodore's seventeen works on Islam were actually the work of a heretofore unknown John the Deacon, who was perhaps only recapitulating the teachings of Theodore.[18] The context of the works themselves suggest that the content was not originally in

14 Michael the Syrian calls attention to the fact that Theodore spoke the "Saracen language". See Chabot (ed.), *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. IV, pp. 32–34.

15 Published Greek works by Theodore in Migne are found at PG 97.1461–1610, 94.594–596, 1595–1598. For Theodore's unpublished works see Khalil Samir, 'al-Jadīd fī sīrat Thāwudūrus Abī Qurrah wa-āthārihi', *al-Mashriq* 73 (1999) 433–436, cited in Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', p. 361.

16 Griffith, 'The Monks of Palestine', pp. 22–23.

17 Griffith has identified the only work extant in Greek and Arabic, a short treatise on free will with some variations between the two texts; this is discussed further below. S. H. Griffith, 'Some Unpublished Arabic Sayings attributed to Theodore Abu Qurrah', *Le Muséon* 92 (1979), pp. 27–35, at 29.

18 Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, pp. 50–52.

Greek, insofar as they are all purported dialogues Theodore had with Muslims, necessarily held in Arabic. It is also possible that the works were not a record of actual debates, but that the author merely used the popular literary *topos* of *Erotapokriseis* to communicate a series of ideas to his readers.[19] This view would further add strength to the claim that someone such as John the Deacon composed them using Theodore's name for rhetorical purposes.

Glei and Khoury made their case on the basis of a discovery of a hitherto lost preface to the works in MS *Paris gr.* 1111, copied in the sixteenth century, although they admit that there is some reason to be concerned with the manuscript's overall reliability.[20] The preface indicates that the works are records of the debates Theodore had with Muslims as recounted (διὰ φωνῆς) by John the Deacon.[21] The phrase διὰ φωνῆς in this text had presented scholars with a problem due to limited awareness of the meanings that the term usually took during this period, coupled with a corruption in the manuscript tradition which had John of Damascus as the person whose teachings were being recounted by Theodore.[22] As John of Damascus died around 750, and the meaning of the phrase unclear, it was not understood in what way Theodore was using the phrase, or who had written the works. Glei and Khoury showed from the lost preface that the text should in fact read 'John the Deacon' (Ἰοάννου Διακόνου) and not 'John of Damascus' (Ἰοάννου Δαμασκενοῦ).[23] The re-discovered preface also made clear that John the Deacon was responsible for a substantial portion of the material. For this reason Glei and Khoury attributed the whole of the dialogues to John, on the basis of the preface and the manuscripts to which they referred.

However, the preface only applies to some of the seventeen dialogues, and the other dialogues are as yet of unknown provenance. Lamoreaux has examined a larger number of manuscripts than did Glei and Khoury, and these clearly indicate John the Deacon's preface was originally only linked to nine of the dialogues.[24] At the same time, Lamoreaux tried to show that four of the other

19 This literary form became a quite common way of expressing ideas in late antiquity. See Pappadoyannakis, 'Instruction by Question and Answer'.

20 Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 68.

21 Ibid., p. 86.

22 Richard discusses the different usages of the phrase which up until the eighth century usually meant the work was derived from the lectures or oral teachings of another person, but after which more and more came to mean that the work was written by the person himself. M. Richard, 'ΑΠΟ ΦΩΝΗΣ', *Byz* 20 (1950), pp. 191–222.

23 Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 86.

24 Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', p. 374. These nine correspond to what Glei and Khoury had perceived were the 'first part' of John the Deacon's work. In

eight dialogues were transmitted anonymously before they became associated with the name of John the Deacon or Theodore Abu Qurrah.[25] The remaining four were incorporated into what Lamoreaux terms the 'shared core' of a group of works attributed to Theodore from as early as 932 and found in MS *Moscow Historical Museum gr.* 231. Indeed, Lamoreaux suggests the possibility that in fact the manuscript tradition attributing the works to Theodore very likely goes back even earlier, causing some difficulty in attributing the works to someone other than Theodore.[26]

Nonetheless, other Greek works attributed to Theodore show signs that either he did not write them, or that they were not originally written in Greek. Westerink showed that the third part of Opus 39 should in fact be attributed to Arethas, while one of the manuscripts used in the Migne collection shows that at least one short piece may be the work of Photius.[27] Lamoreaux observed that Migne's edition also gives additional indications that some of the other Greek works by Theodore are transmitted under alternative names.[28] All things considered, the case that Theodore did not actually compose much of his work in Greek has gained momentum, and there will be little reason to think he composed anything in Greek if more evidence to the contrary is found. Yet with critical editions of the Greek and Arabic corpora still lacking, it may be some time before the truth of the matter is uncovered.[29] Against this view, there is very little evidence of editions having been made of particular works in both Greek and Arabic, and this would seem odd if it is believed that the Greek works are products of translations made from Arabic ones. As already stated,

---

the MS tradition, they are referred to as Opuscula 18–25 and 32. Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, pp. 50–52 and 68–70.

25 Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', pp. 373–74. Dr. Glei has informed me, however, that the four Opuscula in question (35–38) are also located in Monacensis gr. 66 (16th century), together with part of John the Deacon's nine, and other works by Theodore. He continues to feel that given the similarity of content and style we cannot exclude authorship. Given this information, the question of the four must remain open barring further research.

26 Lamoreaux does not rule out the possibility that Theodore composed none of his works in Greek, but only points out that the tradition of attaching Theodore's name to these dialogues is very early, and cannot have been more than a century after the theologian's death. Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', pp. 380–86.

27 L. G. Westerink, 'Marginalia by Arethas in Moscow Greek MS 231', *Byz* 42 (1972), pp. 196–244, at 212 and Opus 40, PG 1597.

28 Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', p. 386.

29 Theodore's works are preserved in Georgian, Arabic, Greek, Armenian, and possibly Syriac.

with the exception of one work of little more than a page and of uncertain authorship, there is no work which appears in both Greek and Arabic.[30]

Further, many of the Greek works that are no longer directly attributable to Theodore directly show his influence over the author of those works, in that from an early date he is often named as the Christian interlocutor; it has also been shown that some arguments from the Greek works appear in other forms in the Arabic works. For this reason all seventeen dialogues on Islam should be considered in any comparison with John of Damascus' work.[31] Lamoreaux showed that although John the Deacon may have written nine of the dialogues concerning Islam, he was clearly dependent on some of the ideas in Theodore's Arabic works in having done so. Theodore's *On the Existence of God and the True Religion, On the Confirmation of the Gospel*, and *On the Confirmation of the Law of Moses*, all exhibit strong parallels with Opus 21, or John the Deacon's fourth dialogue. Similarly, the extant Arabic work entitled *Discourse Confirming That God Has a Son* has been demonstrated to contain the precise arguments found in Opus 25, or John the Deacon's eighth dialogue.[32] Thus we may fairly compare those works with the Damascene's, as they are probably the product of Theodore's thought, of whom in any case John the Deacon himself purports to be recounting the teachings, and at present there is no *prima facie* reason for rejecting John the Deacon's claims to be representing his subject's perspective.

Another reason to consider this Greek material as originating with the bishop is that it appears that no extant work of Theodore's written originally in Arabic focuses on Islam or Muslims specifically.[33] This seems especially signifi-

30 The only possible exception to this appears to be a short fragment on Free Will. See Griffith, 'Some Unpublished Sayings'. The text appears as two pages in Lamoreaux's translation of the Greek text (pp. 207–08). Although the manuscript from which the Arabic original was taken dates from the ninth century, it represents a very unusual discourse which suggests that the dialogue may be contrived. Further questions are raised in that there exists a Greek version nearly identical to the Arabic (Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, pp. 150–52). Additionally, Griffith voiced his opinion that the manuscript evidence suggests that the work was not written by Abu Qurrah, but by Stephen Ramleh, who edited the text as one "reporting what he considers to be two particularly effective responses of Abu Qurrah to what was a standard Muslim challenge to Christians at the time." (Griffith, p. 31).

31 Opuscula 35–38 still being controversial, as explained above.

32 The parallels are discussed in: Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', pp. 379–83.

33 The observation that no Arabic work of Theodore's using the term 'Muslim', 'Saracen', or 'Hagarene' is extant is my own, although similar features in other works of the period can be found. See for example S. T. Keating (ed.), *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Early*

cant given the title usually found prefacing the nine dialogues now attributed to John the Deacon. The title reads, "Ἐκ τῶν πρὸ τοὺς Σαρακηνοὺς ἀντιρήσεων τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Θεοδώρου Χαρρὰν τὸ ἐπίκλην Ἀβουκαρᾶ διὰ φωνῆς Ἰωάννου Διακόνου" or "Refutations of the Saracens by the bishop Theodore of Haran called Abu Qurrah, as recounted by John the Deacon."[34] It is difficult to be certain whether the Greek texts we now have are amended translations of Arabic originals, or if the Greek texts are original, and the Arabic ones we have are amended translations of those. A look through Theodore's many works reveals that only in the Greek works attributable to him can one find material explicitly identifying Theodore's Arab interlocutors as Saracens, Hagarenes, or Ishmaelites. In works that appear to engage Muslims in Arabic, Theodore employs alternative terms, often naming his opponents simply as 'Outsiders' (*al-barrāniyyīn*).[35]

Nevertheless, it seems clear that these 'Outsiders' in the Arabic works were Muslims, even if this is not explicitly stated in the Arabic texts, and several possible reasons for this circumlocution present themselves.[36] The first is that Theodore did not intend any of his written works in Arabic to focus on Islam, or further, if we accept the possibility that he did not write anything in Greek, he may not have written anything on Islam at all. This would seem unimaginable, especially given the content of his other works, and the reputation he developed in the Arab Christian world as an expert debater against Muslims.

Islamic Period: The Christian Apologies of Abu Raitah (Brill, 2006), who makes a similar observation for that work. See Lamoreaux's introduction and his translation of the works for examples. As I shall discuss below, one other possible text is the famous dialogue Theodore is said to have had at the court of the Caliph al-Ma'mun. The authenticity of this text, however, has been doubted numerous times by scholars and is probably not the work of Abu Qurrah.

34 Greek citations will be taken from Glei and Khoury's edition. Translations of Greek are mine, while Arabic translations are taken from Lamoreaux's text. Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 86.

35 Bertaina, 'An Arabic Account of Theodore Abu Qurra in Debate', pp. 157–58. See also Griffith (ed.), *A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons*, p. 30 and 39, where Griffith explains in the notes that in the Islamic milieu in which Theodore wrote he avoided direct references to Muslims.

36 See Lamoreaux's translations of Theodore's Arabic works, and Bertaina's translation of Theodore's debate at the court of Caliph al-Ma'mun, which translates the Arabic term as 'Muslim' in order to avoid confusion. It is clear that the practice of substituting terms such as 'outsiders' for words which would clearly identify Muslims specifically was common among Arab Christian theologians. See for example what has been called the first Arabic *Summa Theologiae* and its reference to 'monotheists' (*al-Muwaḥḥidīn*), when clearly Muslims are intended. M. Swanson, 'Beyond Prooftexting: Approaches to the Qur'ān in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies', *MW* 88.3–4 (1998), pp. 297–319, at 299–300.

Among the theologian's Arabic corpus one can find not only theological treatises concerned with what might be perceived as erudite works on Christology or Triadology (although these are certainly present), but also polemical works such as *Against the Armenians, Against the Jews*, and *On the Characteristics of the True Religion.* Given subjects such as these, one would expect the author of such works to have written on the theology of his overlords.

Another alternative is that he did write on Islam, but either only in Greek, or, if in Arabic, in a more subtle manner. The former suggestion is supported by the fact that we have Greek works of his that are concerned with Islam, the latter by some references to Muslim practices in his Arabic works that suggest he intended Islam and Muslims when writing. It has been suggested that when Christians sometimes attacked Jews in their writings, they intended Muslims as the real target, this being done because it was safer in the contemporary religious climate to attack Jews than Muslims, and certain theological criticisms applied to both.[37] Theodore mentions Muhammad and the Muslims once at the very beginning of his treatise introducing his methodology for discerning the true religion. *Theologus Autodidactus* appears to be a kind of introduction to all of Theodore's theology, setting a scene where the theologian walks down from the mountain and into the city where he is met by representatives of all the world's religions.[38] The reference to Islam and Muslims takes up no more than a few lines, but it is enough to suggest that Theodore intends them as one of the targets of his theological project. In his work on icons, Theodore refers constantly to "anyone else who lays claim to faith" or "outsiders", and other epithets, often while using phrases taken directly from the Qur'an.[39]

Finally, it is possible that John the Deacon altered those Greek texts which do not deal explicitly with Islam in order to make them do so, or that Theodore altered the Arabic texts to remove obvious references to Islam once they had already been composed in Greek. The former supposition can be supported by John's clear emendation of Theodore's *Discourse Concerning That God Has a Son.*[40] In this work, Opus 25 of Theodore's Greek corpus, we find that a Saracen interlocutor has been introduced into the text where the text in Arabic reads without an interlocutor.[41] Such an adjustment could obviously

37 See Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, p. 70, who suggests this is particularly the case with Theodore.

38 Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, pp. 1–27.

39 For example, Griffith (ed.), *A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons*, pp. 38–39, or 41 where Theodore refers to "Jews and others …".

40 Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, pp. 140–49.

41 See Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', pp. 382–84, for discussion.

have been manufactured for rhetorical purposes. The latter alternative, as explained below, can be conjectured on the basis that anti-Islamic tracts written in Arabic might have been dangerous to compose.

We cannot know if similar alterations were made at the request or permission of Theodore, but logical reasons for permitting such a practice present themselves. Several of the Greek dialogues portray Theodore having debates with Muslims, and these would have been conducted in Arabic, if in fact they took place. However, documenting the defeat of an Arab notable in debate would not necessarily have been to Theodore's advantage, and may well have ended with him imprisoned or executed. It was not safe to speak openly against the religion of the Arabs, as is evident from Theodore's own request in one of his dialogues that should he defeat his overlord no punishment should befall him, as well as his reticence in answering questions in another dialogue.[42] It has further been observed that the Greek corpus of works, and in particular the nine dialogues proceeding from the hand of John the Deacon, are more polemical in nature than Theodore's other works.[43] It seems logical that John may

42 Bertaina, 'An Arabic Account of Theodore Abu Qurra in Debate', p. 392. Early Christian-Muslim dispute texts regularly include a few lines in which the Christian who is brought before the Muslim makes reference to his fear to speak openly about his faith, or asking the Muslim permission to do so. See, for example, G. B. Marcuzzo (ed.), *Le dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade avec Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hāšimī à Jérusalem vers 820: étude, édition critique et traduction annotée d'un texte théologique chrétien de la littérature arabe* (Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 1986), pp. 278–80 and 312–17, where some considerable space is given to establishing freedom of speech and freedom from harm for the Christian. The same suggestion has recently been made of Abu Raita (c. 775–c. 835), who does not mention the Qur'an or Muhammad in any of his own works on Islam. In his case, terms such as "our opponents" and "those who differ from us" were used as euphemisms for Muslims and Islam. See Keating (ed.), *Defending the "People of Truth"*, pp. 6 and 66. It should be noted, however, that the same line is also used when the positions are reversed, and a Muslim is questioned before a Christian authority. See for example, S. H. Griffith, 'Bashir/Beser: Boon Companion of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III; the Islamic Recension of his Story', *Le Muséon* 103 (1990), pp. 293–327, at 317.

43 Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 70. Griffith has argued in general that theologians composing works having to do with Islam in Arabic and Syriac were less polemical and less hostile than their Greek counterparts, even to such an extent as to contribute to what he considers to be an emerging alternative 'Melkite' identity to that of the 'Byzantine' identity. See Griffith, 'From Aramaic to Arabic', pp. 253–64 and S. H. Griffith, 'The Prophet Muhammad, his Scripture and his Message according to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the First Abbasid Century', in T. Fahd (ed.), *La Vie du Prophète Mahomet: Colloque de Strasbourg, Octobre 1980* (Presses universitaires de France, 1983), pp. 99–146, at 131. Although this may not have a direct bearing on the issue here, as

have altered the dialogues in order to use them as proof texts against Islam for Greek-speaking communities. Although literature in Arabic of Christian provenance has usually been used to argue for the growth of the use of Arabic in the Arabic-speaking community of believers, it is nevertheless possible that some of this literature may have circulated more widely than just within those communities.[44] Indeed, if it is true that the Christian communities of Syria and Palestine were increasingly bilingual by this time, they would have been able to profit from the arguments without fear of the texts being discovered, and it might not matter much to them whether they held copies of the works in Arabic or Greek. These questions are not easily answered without more evidence, which unfortunately we do not have. However, let us turn to another question: the quality of Theodore's information concerning Islam. Perhaps by addressing it, we will be able to shed some light on the questions here.

Theodore Abu Qurrah on Islam

At first glance, there appear to be surprisingly few similarities between John of Damascus and Theodore Abu Qurrah in their theological approaches taken towards Islam. One detects that John of Damascus' project was significantly more historical and informative with respect to the new religion, while Theodore's was decidedly more theological and polemical. Beliefs and practices are not described in detail by Theodore, whereas several are listed and expanded upon in John's work. While John of Damascus regards various Islamic beliefs as "worthy of laughter", Theodore engages in the dialogues with Islamic ideas in an effort to refute them. Naturally a number of differences can be understood as a result of the literary forms in which the texts appear. John's text was written as the hundredth heresy ending his book *On Heresies*, while Theodore's works, as I have already said, are mostly dialogical in form.

---

the Greek and Arabic works in question may stem from the same person, it is also possible that the difference in emphasis may result from the lack of a fear of reprisal, rather than a more congenial attitude to Muslims. The question should remain open, all the more so if it can be demonstrated that Theodore appears as nearly two different persons when comparing his Greek and Arabic corpora.

44 Griffith has written extensively of the growth of the use of Arabic by Christians, but without much reference to whether such texts may have circulated among Arab ruling elites. He has suggested, however, that John the Deacon's works may have been translated/edited by John for audiences in Constantinople. Griffith, 'Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam', pp. 253–63.

Yet given Theodore's position and education, we can use him as a kind of foil to reflect on the extent to which Orthodox Melkite elites had access to Islamic theology in the eighth century, and examining his understanding of Islam can help substantiate reflections on John and his observations. The sources suggest that Christians engaged in debate over Islam at venues of no less prestige than the Caliphal Court itself, and were regularly exposed to Islamic theology, if not to the Qurʾan itself. In the late eighth century the Patriarch of the Church of the East, Timothy, appears to have participated in one such debate.[45] Theodore himself is traditionally believed to have participated in a debate at the court in Baghdad, and a tradition that such debates were common grew up in the eighth century.[46] Furthermore, Theodore's Arabic works contain direct quotations from passages in the Qur'an as we know it today.[47] At one point Theodore explicitly mentions Mecca, showing his awareness of its importance, and in another place Theodore demonstrates his awareness of Islamic theology of the will and the practice of polygamy among Muslims.[48] I have already called attention to the fact that Theodore shows an awareness of the number and types of rivers in paradise as found in the Qur'an, and in distinction from what John of Damascus knows.[49] It is further clear that Theodore must have traveled extensively, as we have evidence he visited Armenia and Jerusalem, and further traditions place him in Baghdad. His position within the Melkite Chalcedonian Church afforded him regular contact with Muslims, and as we can see, his knowledge of that faith was considerable.

---

45 A. Mingana and R. Harris, 'The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12.1 (1928), pp. 137–298.

46 S. H. Griffith, 'The Monk in the Emir's *Majlis*: Reflections on a Popular Genre of Christian Literary Apologetics in Arabic in the Early Islamic Period', in H. Lazarus-Yafeh, M. R. Cohen et al. (eds.), *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam* (1999), pp. 13–65. Griffith reports that some texts purport to reflect earlier debates, but were clearly written in the eighth century, with the tradition of such debates expanding greatly in the ninth century. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 76–80.

47 S. H. Griffith, 'The Qurʾān in Arab Christians Texts: The Development of an Apologetical Argument: Abū Qurrah in the Maǧlis of Al-Ma'mūn', *PdO* 24 (1999), pp. 203–33, and Bertaina, 'An Arabic Account of Theodore Abu Qurra in Debate', p. 9, and following in the text Bertaina analyzes.

48 Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, pp. 207–08 on free will, and Opus 24 dealing with polygamy, Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, pp. 114–17.

49 See Chapter 4.

Theodore, the Qur'an, and Muhammad

Theodore's use of the Qur'an suggests an established text from which he draws quotations, and he even appeals to it for his own purposes, something not found in either John of Damascus or the 'Umar-Leo correspondence.[50] Perhaps even more relevant, however, is that neither John nor Leo treats the Qur'an as a text they believe was highly authoritative in the Islamic community. In John's case a number of ideas and laws are attributed to Muhammad, but as such they do not come in the form of direct quotations from the Qur'an. Rather, they are attributed to the person of Muhammad himself, and, as we have seen, many are not found in the current canonical text of the Qur'an. In the lengthy text of the Leo correspondence, a similar situation presents itself. While Leo accuses Muslims of saying many things, and believing many others, nowhere does it appear that the author of the Leo letter cites the Qur'an as though it were the primary, or even a significant source of authority in the minds of his interlocutors. Instead, in that work, the Bible itself plays a more pivotal role, and quotations from it do appear as though these were held in authority for the Muslim community. As in the case with John's work, attributions of new laws and customs are made to Muhammad, and although there is no reason to suppose that such ideas are not being taken from the Qur'an this is perhaps doubtful given the lack of actual Qur'anic phraseology. By contrast to these works, Theodore is much more explicit in his use of the Qur'an, even if he refrains from referring to the book itself.[51]

Apart from Theodore's use of the Qur'an suggesting his own more intimate familiarity with it, his practice also suggests the view that appreciation for the value of material found in the Qur'an as a text was in the ascendance. Theodore, not unlike some of his fellow Melkites, seems to have quoted from the Qur'an in support of his own Christian positions.[52] For example, in his work *On the*

50 As mentioned in chapter 3 on John's sources above, it has been argued that John quoted the Qur'an accurately once in his treatise, although as I hope I have shown, we cannot know if this quotation was actually taken from the Qur'an, of if John acquired such knowledge orally. Versteegh has argued that John's quotation was much less literal than Nicetas' translation of the same passage. Versteegh, 'Greek Translations of the Qu'ran', pp. 58–59.

51 For quotations from the Qur'an made by Theodore, refer to the index of Scriptural citations in Lamoreaux's translation of Theodore's work, as well as the same in Griffith's translation of Theodore's treatise on Icons. Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 269. Griffith (ed.), *A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons*, p. 99.

52 On this issue and the variety of ways Christians of the seventh to ninth centuries have used the Qur'an, see B. Roggema, 'A Christian Reading of the Qur'an: The Legend of

Confirmation of the Gospel, Theodore writes of it, "In it, there is no doubt", a phrase known from several places in the Qur'an, but used in that book to refer to itself, and not the Gospel.[53] In another work, on *Free Will*, Theodore uses the Qur'an to argue that God would never compel people to act against their own will.[54] In neither of these passages does Theodore call attention to the fact that his words proceed from the Qur'an, and this perhaps further suggests that while the words of the book held authority, at the very least Christians may have perceived a certain ambiguity in how the book itself was respected. In addition to not citing his source, Theodore does not attach Muhammad's name to the quotations, and this further brings to our attention the possibility that the words found in the Qur'an were perhaps set in opposition to the person Muhammad in the minds of Christians, and the possibility that the two were treated differently. Thus, while certain phrases may have found their way into common parlance and were deemed acceptable to Christians, the use of these phrases in no way suggests acceptance of Muhammad himself.

It should be added here that refutations written of the Qur'an or works in which the Qur'an is a target specifically do not begin to appear until the middle or even late ninth century, and with those such as the "Refutation of the Qur'an" by Nicetas of Byzantium (fl. 842–67) in the Greek-speaking world, and the Apology of 'Abd al-Masih ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (9th/10th century) in the Arabic one.[55] Nicetas' work has as its main aim the discrediting of the Qur'an as a book divinely revealed. He was apparently working from a Greek translation

Sergius-Bahīrā and its use of Qur'an and Sīra', in D. Thomas (ed.), *Syrian Christians Under Islam: the First Thousand Years* (Brill, 2001), pp. 57–74 and Swanson, 'Beyond Prooftexting'.

53 Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 51. Sura 2:2, 10:37, and 32:2 make this claim for the Qur'an.

54 Griffith, 'Free Will in Christian Kalam', p. 97. Also see Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 196. Theodore would also seem to appeal to Qur'anic authority in referring to Abraham as "God's Friend" in his treatise on the Veneration of Icons. See Griffith (ed.), *A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons*, p. 49.

55 For the works by Nicetas, see K. Förstel (ed.), *Niketas von Byzanz. Schriften zum Islam* (Echter, 2000). The Apology of al-Kindi has not been adequately dated, and there are reasons to think it is the product of the tenth century. See Watt, *Muslim-Christian Encounters*, pp. 59–88 and Griffith, 'The Prophet Muhammad, his Scripture and his Message', pp. 105–08, who see no reason not to accept the earlier dating. More recently see P. S. V. Koningsveld, 'The Apology of Al-Kindi', in T. L. Hettema, A. V. D. Kooij, and J. A. M. Snoek (eds.), *Religious Polemics in Context: Papers presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions* (*Lisor*) *held at Leiden, 27–28 April, 2000* (Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), pp. 69–92, who defends an earlier dating, and argues the theology appears appropriate to a close successor of Theodore's. In all cases the treatise must have been written between c. 820 and 1050, as Griffith has shown.

of the Qur'an, and did not know Arabic, but the translation he had was faithful to the original Qur'an in most cases.[56] Al-Kindi, who worked in Arabic, was not solely concerned with the refutation of the Qur'an, but does devote some considerable space to that project in his work attempting to refute Islam.[57] He quoted the Qur'an frequently in an effort to demonstrate its fallibility.[58] In comparison with these works, nothing of the kind appeared during the lifetime of John of Damascus or Theodore Abu Qurrah, and in general verses from the Qur'an were often used by Christians to support Christianity, as was the case with Theodore.[59]

If Theodore made greater use of the Qur'an than his predecessors, it is also clear that the target of his polemical writings against Islam was Muhammad himself, rather than the Qur'an. This aligns him more closely with John of Damascus and the author of the Leo correspondence, rather than with Nicetas of Byzantium or al-Kindi. The accusations that Muhammad was the disciple of an Arian, that he performed no miracles when he came, and that he was not prophesied to come by earlier prophets are all features in Abu Qurrah's work.[60] All of these arguments appear in John of Damascus' work on Islam as well. Thus, while Theodore's approach to Muhammad is similar to John's, his relationship to the Qur'an, or verses which appear in the Qur'an, was clearly different.

The case has not yet been made that evidence complementary to the revisionist theory of a slow process of canonization for the Qur'an can be found among Christians and their use of the Qur'an, and the translations of Theodore's works which have been produced, along with their commentaries, seem to clearly complement the theory that the Qur'an developed both in perceived importance and as a fixed text over the two centuries following Muhammad's death (632–832). While attention has been drawn to the fact that Theodore's use of the Bible reveals that he worked with a text unknown

56 The translation was clearly not perfect, and does lead Nicetas astray from time to time, but Versteegh has counted at least 200 verses which were directly translated from Arabic into Greek. Versteegh, 'Greek Translations of the Qur'an', p. 54.

57 See W. Muir (ed.), *The Apology of Al Kindy* (2nd edn., SPCK 1887).

58 Koningsveld, 'The Apology of Al-Kindi'.

59 Swanson has documented some early evidence of Christian misuse of the Qur'an, but without arguing that the Qur'an itself was distorted. John of Damascus, as we have already seen, regarded a Muslim book as "worthy of laughter", but did not focus his attention on the book itself. See Swanson, 'Beyond Prooftexting'.

60 See Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, pp. 89–96, 98–100, and 18 and Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, pp. 213–15, and 24–25. More is said about Arianism as a source for Muhammad below.

to us and in some cases reveals mistaken understanding, I am not aware that a similar study of his use of the Qur'an has been made, and it is telling that Theodore's works appear to quote the Qur'an accurately at the same time he was not quoting the Bible word for word.[61]

The Arian Monk

One point of clear convergence between the two theologians comes with the assertion that Muhammad studied under an Arian monk for his education in matters relating to theology. As discussed above, the idea that Muhammad had learned from a monk had a wide currency in the Middle East in the eighth and ninth centuries, both among Christians and Muslims.[62] In Christian sources, such as those of our authors, the monk is either made out to be a heretic, sometimes representing one of the competing Christian traditions in the Levant, or he is seen as an orthodox monk who taught Muhammad the truth, and whom Muhammad later ignored or misunderstood. In Muslim sources the monk is most often used to support the claim that Muhammad was a prophet, and his religious affiliation is not expanded on; its importance is not as relevant for Muslims unconcerned with, and often unaware of, intra-Christian disputation.[63] What makes the monk a unique connection between John and Theodore, however, is his status as an Arian, something claimed by virtually no other contemporary sources, Christian or Muslim.

In the course of John of Damascus' and Theodore Abu Qurrah's works on Islam, they report that Muhammad learned about Christianity from an Arian, whom John describes as a monk.[64] Theodore is more explicit in characterizing

61 Theodore's use of the Bible has been studied in A. S. Tritton, 'The Bible Text of Theodore Abu Kurra', *JTS* 34 (1933), pp. 52–55 and K. Samir, 'Note sur les citations biblique chez Abū Qurrah', *OCP* 49 (1983), pp. 469–86. Griffith has written an article on Christian use of the Qur'an, but not on the accuracy of Theodore's quotations. See Griffith, 'The Qur'ān in Arab Christians Texts'. For the extent to which ninth century Arabic speaking Christians clearly knew parts of the Qur'an well, and could quote it extensively, see Roggema, 'A Christian Reading of the Qur'an'. For the extent to which Greek-speaking Christians had access, see Versteegh, 'Greek Translations of the Qu'ran', p. 54, who counts 200 direct translations from the Qur'an into Greek in Nicetas of Byzatium.

62 See chapter 4 on *Islamic and Para-Islamic Traditions* for examples.

63 For examples of how the monk was portrayed as an orthodox monk, whether proceeding from the non-Chalcedonian (Jacobite), Church of the East (Nestorian), or Chalcedonian (Melkite) tradition, see Roggema, 'The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā', pp. 123–34.

64 John refers to the monk as "supposedly Arian" (ὁμοίως ἀρειανῷ).

the Arian's relationship to Muhammad, but does not actually identify the person as a monk, saying only that Muhammad was the "disciple of an Arian".[65] Given both Theodore's relationship to John, and the ubiquity of the view Muhammad had a monk for a teacher, there is no reason to doubt Theodore has a monk in mind when referring to Muhammad's teacher, and as we shall see in a moment, no reason either to doubt that Theodore received this tradition via John.[66]

Neither of the two theologians assigns a name to this person in their other works, but given the scarcity with which later theologians in the Christian tradition identified the monk as an "Arian", it is clear that we are dealing with one of the direct influences John of Damascus had on his spiritual disciple Theodore.[67] Theologians who followed them, and indeed contemporary with Theodore, characterized the monk as proceeding either from the Jacobite, Nestorian, or other tradition.[68] This was the case whether or not the Christian portrayals of the monk depicted him as representative of their own orthodox tradition, or of a heretical tradition. In either case, apart from only one or two later Armenian traditions, apparently no other theologian, Arabic, Syriac, or Greek, made the sole source of Muhammad's knowledge about Christianity a monk of the 'Arian' tradition.[69] This would become the case even with John of Damascus' text, as it was later circulated in one of the more widespread recensions. MS Paris gr. 1320 (11th century) gives Jews, Christians, Arians, and

65 Theodore is more explicit, saying that the false prophet of the Saracens was "the disciple of an Arian" (Ἀρειανοῦ ἀκροατὴς). Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 118; Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 225.

66 See the above chapter on Islamic and para-Islamic Traditions for information about where the monk appears in early Christian and Muslim sources.

67 As mentioned in my chapter on Islamic and para-Islamic Traditions, where a name is given to the monk in the sources it is usually 'Bahīrā'.

68 For a good summary of the Byzantine polemical accounts of the monk and his relationship to Muhammad, see Khoury, *Polemique Byzantine*, pp. 76–87. The Medieval western sources seem most often to attribute Muhammad's education to Nestorianism and/or Sabellianism, although Arianism and other heresies also sometimes feature. See N. Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (rev. edn., Oneworld, 1993), pp. 209–13.

69 For the Armenian traditions, not all of which portray Bahīrā as an Arian, see Thomson, 'Armenian Variations on the Bahira Legend'. There were to be reports from later Byzantines which attributed multiple influential ideologies on Muhammad, some of which included Arianism, but none exclusively so, and most often these ideas were not identified with Arianism, as much as with Nestorianism and Judaism. For those, see Khoury, *Polemique Byzantine*, pp. 76–87.

Nestorians as influential over the Prophet.[70] The tradition preserved in this manuscript would become more popular in Byzantium than that showing an Arian influence alone, suggesting perhaps incredulity among later scribes that Muhammad's education could have been due to only Arian influence and their desire to attribute further heretical influences to him.

Whatever the reason so few other sources give an Arian as the sole teacher of Muhammad, we should regard the fact that both John of Damascus and Theodore Abu Qurrah refer to an Arian teacher as evidence that Theodore received this idea from John. Further, as I have argued above, whether or not the claim is justified, the two may well have had good reason to have believed the characterization literally.[71] At the same time, the evidence being as weak as it is does not allow us to argue positively for their belief as opposed to the possibility of their use of an Arian as a rhetorical device. For the case here, however, the mention of an Arian by both John and Theodore serves as a valuable link between the two, and for their theological views of Islam.

Theodore and Heresy

Unlike his forerunner John, Theodore left no manual of heresies, nor did he leave us any definition of heresy. Thus we must glean what information we can regarding his conception of it from his writings against various heresies. In some respects, this is not as difficult as might at first seem, given the apparently large number of times Theodore chooses to make use of the term. For in contrast to his predecessor, Theodore uses the terms αἵρεσις and αἱρετικός (heretic) frequently. Further, from whichever tradition the heretic may come, he is the victim of a strong polemic. In the Greek corpus it is the Nestorians who receive the most extensive treatment, with at least six short texts devoted to refuting them. In his Arabic works, it would appear that Theodore targeted the

70 See Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. IV, p. 60. Interestingly, this would also appear to be the case in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, where a cursory look at the main secondary references all seem to be consistent with what I have said about Byzantium; namely that while 'Arianism' is sometimes described as one of several contributing factors in influencing Muhammad, the idea that the Prophet was ever the disciple of an Arian, or that he learned from an Arian monk seem to be absent, although as I have said, a Nestorian monk is sometimes adduced. See for example, Daniel, *Islam and the West*, pp. 209–13, Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 52–53.

71 See Chapter 4 above on Islamic and para-Islamic Traditions.

Armenians more than other groups, but Jacobites and Nestorians also appear.[72] In both corpora the words 'heresy' and 'heretic' are used frequently to refer to Theodore's opponents, and sometimes they are used in a treatise repeatedly.

In common practice with the standard nomenclature of his time, Theodore uses a wide vocabulary to describe his opponents from the Islamic tradition, but only once are they referred to as heretics, and then only in what we are certain is John the Deacon's preface to Theodore's debates.[73] In virtually all other treatises, debates, and fragments in the Greek corpus, Theodore refers to Muslims as 'barbarians', 'Hagarenes' and 'Saracens'. Similarly when it comes to the faith as a whole, Theodore also uses θρησκεία to refer to Islam, but it is with difficulty that we find the terms 'heresy' and 'heretic' applied to Islam and Muslims respectively.[74] As regards the Arabic corpus, I have already mentioned how the terms he uses to describe 'Muslims' (if we agree that it is in fact Muslims who appear in these works) are generally ambiguous, requiring the reader to interpret his terminology as applying to the local Arabs.

As I have already said, Theodore is not shy to use opprobrious terms, nor should we think him slow to hurl invective and polemic at the Muslims themselves, particularly in the Greek corpus, which is known to express more polemic toward the Muslims than the Arabic one.[75] In one treatise Muhammad is said to have been possessed by a demon and is called the "insane false prophet of the Hagarenes".[76] In another passage, Theodore or his recorder refers to the

72 Theodore wrote two treatises explicitly against the practices of the Armenians. See Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, pp. 83–102.

73 I have briefly discussed John the Deacon's relationship to Theodore above. For a fuller discussion, and on the preface to which I refer, see Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon'. For the place where John the Deacon refers to Muslims inferentially as heretics, see Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 86; Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 211. In that passage, it is even questionable if John intends the term 'heretic' to be used in reference to Muslims, as although he alludes to how heretics assail the Church, he also appears to avoid speaking of the "heresy of the Hagarenes", instead choosing, "δυσσεβῆ Ἀγαρηνῶν θρησκείαν" or the "impious religion of the Hagarenes". See Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 88, ln. 45.

74 Theodore refers in at least one dialogue with a Saracen to "your religion". Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 94; Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 215.

75 I have argued above for the possibility that Theodore restrains himself in some of the Arabic texts. Here I am arguing that the Greek corpus, which has been previously assessed as more polemical, nevertheless refrains from applying 'heresy' and 'heretic' to Islam. For the assessment that Theodore's Greek works are more polemical than his Arabic ones when dealing with Muslims and Islam, with which I am in agreement, see Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, pp. 50–52.

76 Ibid., p. 98; Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 224.

"Saracen hypocrites".[77] Thus, if Theodore considered the term 'heresy' to be a strong insult and to fit Islam theologically, we should expect to find it frequently in his works against the faith. Instead, we are at a loss to find it applied to Islam, as indeed we are to find him applying it to Judaism, from which he also appears to refrain.

Given this unusual circumstance, I believe we are looking at a theological position in Theodore's writings, rather than a difference in polemical emphasis resulting from writing for a different political or denominational readership. Griffith has argued at length that there is a difference between Arabic and Greek Christian polemical writings towards Islam, the latter of which he claims are significantly more polemically inclined.[78] But, if that is the case, we should rather expect the term to appear. Theodore's alternative word choice must be considered to stem from how he thinks of the Muslims, which are not in strictly heretical terms. There is no evidence in Theodore's works that he saw Islam as a divergent form of Christianity, and if Theodore were working with the traditional understanding of heresy as a departure from the true Christian faith he would not have applied the term to Islam because he did not see it as fitting its traditional meaning. It was not so long before Theodore that Sophronius, also an immediate forerunner of Theodore in the Melkite Orthodox tradition in Palestine, referred to Simon Magus as he "who first made a most evil beginning to all evil heresies."[79] Sophronius' statement would seem to fit more comfortably with the traditional understanding of heresy as a departure from Christ. He did not include the Saracens in his Synodical letter written in 634, in which he named and condemned all heresies to have come into existence since Simon.[80]

The standard nomenclature in Theodore's time dictated that he refer to Muslims as Saracens, Hagarenes, or Ishmaelites (at least as far as the Greek literature is concerned), but this nomenclature may reflect an adherence to the thought that Muslims were not part of a new heretical movement. Christians had seen the Ishmaelites in primarily genealogical and ethnographical terms

---

77 Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 94; Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 214.

78 Grifith makes the case that Greek works from the seventh to ninth centuries display considerably more polemic than their Arabic counterparts. This is a position with which I take some exception, but is outside the focus of my presentation here. For Griffith's argument, however, see Griffith, 'Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam', pp. 256–65. As regards Theodore's works, there is no mistake that the Greek corpus is more polemical.

79 Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-century Heresy*, pp. 136–37.

80 Ibid.

in the pre-Islamic period, as it was common for the Hellenic peoples to conceptualize their surrounding neighbors in terms of their descent from mythical founders or forefathers.[81] The continued use of such nomenclature suggests that they may not have seen the Muslims are representatives of a new confession, which made it difficult for theologians like John and Theodore to identify it as 'heresy' in the traditional sense seen in chapter 1 above. It would be some centuries until the term *Mousoulman* (μουσουλμάνος) came into use, Anna Comnene (1083–1153) being perhaps the first author in the Greek-speaking world to use it.[82] It does not appear that the term *Mohammadan* (μωαμεθανός) can be traced to a period prior to the fifteenth century.[83]

This of course is not to say that no Byzantines viewed the Ishmaelites as partakers of αἵρεσις, as some clearly did.[84] When exactly the shift was made in the Byzantine or Arab-Christian mind from perceiving Muslims as an 'ethno-socio' group with *historical* roots to representatives of a coherent and differing theological faith system is not clear; there is good evidence to suggest that the Arabs did not see themselves in such a manner until the late seventh century, but rather as a kin group belonging together by virtue of sharing the Arabic

81 F. Millar, 'Hagar, Ishmael, Josephus, and the Origins of Islam', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 44 (1993), pp. 23–45. This may be why John of Damascus associates the term 'Saracen' with Sarah, the wife of Abraham. It has been argued that he does so for polemical purposes, but Millar's study shows that such a practice in the pre-Islamic period would have been standard.

82 B. Leib (ed.), *Alexiade* (*règne de l'empereur Alexis I Comnène, 1081–1118*) 4 vols. (2nd edn., Société d'Édition les Belles Lettres, 1967), 14.3.7 and 14.6.1.

83 E. Trapp (ed.), *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität: besonders des 9.–12. Jahrhunderts* (Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1993). According to some modern Greek dictionaries, the term μωαμεθαν is a modern Greek term for Μωαμεθίτης, its Medieval Greek equivalent. That said, Μωαμεθίτης does not appear in a search of TLG, which can perform word searches in a vast number of Greek texts up through the 15th century. μωαμεθανός, however appears once in the 'Short Chronicles', a set of texts that are difficult to date, but from the 17th century at the latest, although many of the texts contained date from earlier periods. The text to which I refer is MS Zaborda 42 (dated 1422). 'Μωαμεθανῶν' occurs as an editorial conjecture in this text where the modern editor has substituted 'Μωαμεθανῶν' for '… εθανῶν'. See P. Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, 3 vols. (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), vol. I, p.683 (chronicle 114.1.3). The point is that it was late in the Greek tradition that terminology for Islam and Muslims came to resemble typical terminology used for heresies in the Byzantine world.

84 Nicetas of Byzantium and John the Deacon are two examples of authors contemporary with Theodore who could use the term to describe Islam. For John the Deacon, see this chapter above, and for Nicetas, see K. Förstel (ed.), *Niketas von Byzanz. Schriften zum Islam* (Echter, 2000).

language and representing a more vigorous adherence to monotheism, and a strict adherence to particular laws or customs.[85] In respect of the Arabic terms and how they were used, the case is still to be studied, but as I have alluded to already it seems there was a wide vocabulary in use to refer to Muslims in ways not especially specific to them. Understanding to what extent we can consider people such as Theodore and his thought as products of the 'Byzantine Patristic' world, or the 'Arab Melkite' one would greatly aid us in appreciating and understanding his distinctive theology.[86] Yet even if this Greek nomenclature did not originate with Theodore and he was only accepting what he had received from John, its continued use had the effect of causing theologians and historians to be slow in recognizing any confessional theological components of Islam as distinct from the ethnographical ones they were accustomed to associating with the Ishmaelites, and which may have limited their abilities to think on Islam in terms not familiar to them. Nikephoros (758–828), the Patriarch of Constantinople and author of the 'Short History' written probably in the 780s, refers to the leader of Saracens in Egypt as a pagan (ἕλληνι) and shows no apparent awareness of any theology of the Arabs.[87] The seventh-century Syriac sources, much closer to Theodore, all refer to the Arabs as pagans as Sophronius had, and they largely see them as having come to punish the Christians for their sins. None of the Syriac authors ascribe to Muhammad or the caliphs any religious title, but instead understood them to be ethnic rulers, sent to punish the Christians for their sins.[88]

If we wish to go further in identifying Theodore's specific theological position with respect to Islam, we are somewhat hindered by the difficulty in extricating Theodore from John the Deacon. But the absence of theological terms and nominal idioms can be observed in both the Arabic and Greek works, and

---

85 The most recent work on this subject is that of Donner, who has argued that the earliest representatives of Islam rather attached themselves to churches and synagogues before they formed their own distinct religious identity toward the end of the seventh century. See Donner, 'From Believers to Muslims' and Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*.

86 For one such article which attempts to show that Abu Qurrah both reaches back to the Byzantine Patristic sources, and is formed by the need to respond to an environment dominated by Muslim interrogators, see S. H. Griffith, 'Muslims and Church Councils; the Apology of Theodore Abu Qurrah', *StPatr* 25 (1993), pp. 270–99.

87 C. A. Mango (ed.), *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History, Text, Translation and Commentary* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), pp. 74–75. Nikephoros may well be drawing on earlier sources for his treatise, but it is not known for certain. See Mango's introduction for the current evidence.

88 Saadi, 'Nascent Islam in the Seventh Century Syriac Sources', p. 218–19.

if anything research thus far has suggested that John the Deacon's influence on Theodore's works displays a ratcheting up of polemic rather than a calming down of it.[89] There is thus little reason to suppose that John would have been active in removing theologically polemical terms from Theodore's works; indeed in the one instance we do have of reference to Islam as heresy this can be clearly traced to John the Deacon, and not to Theodore himself. But to extricate Theodore's position completely from John would require a clear critical edition of Theodore's works, and knowledge of what additions, if any, John the Deacon made to them.[90] Until then, we can only say that Theodore does not appear to regard Islam and Muslims in heretical terms.

Abu Qurrah and John of Damascus: Some Differences and Conclusions

As the reader will have anticipated, Theodore shows a better acquaintance with the Islam which was taking its recognizably classical form in the ninth century, and which is familiar to the contemporary reader, than does John. This should hardly be surprising as Theodore lived in the generation following John, and would have experienced an Islam more fully developed. He also shows no signs of associating apocryphal Qur'anic books as though they are a part of the Qur'an, as John might be accused in the case of the story of the She-camel, and he demonstrates an awareness of Islamic traditions which do not explicitly appear in the Qur'an such as the forgiveness of Aisha, but he shows no sign of believing such stories to be a part of the Qur'an itself.[91]

Theodore also manages to quote accurately passages from the Qur'an which John does not, or could not, as for example in the case of the Qur'an's famous

89 This is the conclusion drawn by Glei and Khoury, and is coincident with Griffith's hypothesis that works written for Greek speaking Christian audiences attained a higher degree of polemic against Muslims. Lamoreaux's findings also support this view with regard to Theodore's works, as he has shown that the "shared core" of Theodore's Greek works are the less polemical, while what appear to be the nine added works of John the Deacon are decidedly more polemical. Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', pp. 368–71.

90 Such edition is currently the work of John Lamoreaux, who intends a full study together with editions.

91 Theodore is aware, for example, of the forgiveness of Aisha, who is often thought to be the subject of Surra 33:6, although her name does not appear there. For Theodore's reference, see Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 100; Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, pp. 224–25.

statement on begetting in Sura 112. In that Sura, the Qur'an states, "God the Eternal, Who has not begotten nor has been begotten. There is no equal to Him." As mentioned previously, John quoted the passage inaccurately, reversing the order of begetting and being begotten in his short work. Theodore, on the other hand, quotes the verse in the order the words appear in the Qur'an. Appearing to quote Muhammad himself, he writes, "ὁ θεὸς μουνάξ, ὁ θεὸς στειρόπηκτος, ὃς οὐκ ἐγέννησεν οὐδὲ ἐγεννήθη οὐδὲ γέγονεν αὐτῶ ἀντιμεριοτής τις", or "God is one, barren-constructed, who did not beget and was not begotten, who has no one like him."[92]

Interestingly, not only did Theodore quote this passage accurately, but it seems this Greek text may be unique in the Byzantine tradition for the rendering of the Arabic *samad* as "στειρόπηκτος". It is commonly thought that the Byzantines misunderstood or mistranslated the word *samad* from Arabic into a Greek word meaning either "compacted by hammer blows", or "beaten solid".[93] However, scholars have failed to notice Theodore's unique usage, with the exception of Glei and Reinhold, who edited the Greek work choosing an alternative manuscript reading, and Lamoreaux, who translated the text reading "στειρόπηκτος", but still assuming it to be a mistranslation.[94] On closer analysis, however, there is every reason to assume Theodore translated the Arabic word accurately, or at least as accurately as could be accomplished. The short text of Surra 112 appeared on coins as early as the late seventh century, making a misunderstanding by Theodore in the first instance unlikely. Furthermore, there is evidence that some early Muslim readings of this passage include the idea

92 The translation is mine. Lamoreaux translates this passage using the term 'partner' which I consider misleading in English, as it suggests a reading of *shirk* in the Arabic, which does not appear in the Qur'an, nor is the concept even similar. Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 224. The theological point is important, as Theodore uses ἀντιμεριοτής, which is much more faithfully rendered by 'rival', or possibly 'equal'. See Glei and Khoury (eds.), *Schriften Zum Islam*, p. 98, ln. 20. Jones' translation of the Arabic Qur'anic passage is 'There is no equal to Him'. See Jones (trans.), *The Qur'ān*, p. 596.

93 D. Sahas, "'Holosphyros?' A Byzantine Perception of 'The God of Muhammad'", in Y.Y. Haddad (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Encounters* (University Press of Florida, 1995), pp. 109–25. Greek words used in translation of the word *samad* are numerous. Σφυρόπηκτος, ὁλόσφαιρος, σφυρελακτος, σφυρελατος, ὁλόσφυρος, among others were used. However, Theodore's word here, στειρόπηκτος, does not appear to have been used.

94 Lamoreaux, as mentioned earlier, consulted a number of additional manuscripts Glei and Khoury did not access in making his translation of this text, including the oldest witness, Moscow Historical Museum gr. 231, which, along with two other manuscripts contain the reading στειρόπηκτος. See Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 224n80.

that God was something from whom nothing comes out, or self-sufficient.[95] The word στειρόπηκτος appears to be a hapax legomenon, and so establishing Theodore's exact understanding of *al-samad* in Arabic would be quite difficult, if not impossible. Nevertheless, "barren-constructed", as I have rendered it here, or "barren-built", as Lamoreaux has translated it, would not seem to be far from this early Muslim reading.

Besides writing more extensively on Islam in general, Theodore also wrote on topics that John likewise addressed, but unlike John directed his treatises to Muslim instead of Christian audiences. John wrote three treatises on images, all of them directed to the Byzantine Iconoclast controversy in the Empire, and the enemies of Iconoclasm there.[96] Theodore, on the other hand, while composing his own Iconophilic treatise on Images, directed it entirely toward the Muslims and Jews of his time and place.[97] Similarly, John's work on Islam was clearly directed to Christians as part of his manual on heresies, but Theodore is portrayed, at least, as having engaged in dialogue with Muslims directly. Even if it is shown that the Greek corpus has been altered to appear more polemical, and the dialogues as we have them did not take place, this does not mean we should doubt John the Deacon's statement that Theodore did engage in such

95 See U. Rubin, 'Al-samad and the High God: An Interpretation of Sura CXII', *Der Islam* 61 (1984), pp. 197–217 and the translation of al-Tabari's *tafsīr* on early authorities for *al-samad* in F. Rosenthal, 'Some Minor Problems in the Qur'an', in I. Warraq (ed.), *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary* (Prometheus Books, 2002), pp. 322–42, especially readings II and III. See now also F. Hamza, S. H. Rizvi et al., *An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries* (Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 491–575 for early commentary on this Qur'anic passage. I have brought Theodore's use of this word and the Islamic commentaries on it to the attention of Christos Simelidis, who has in turn made this the subject of an article. See C. Simelidis, 'The Byzantine Understanding of the Qur'anic Term *al-ṣamad* and the Greek Translations of the Qur'an', *Speculum* 86, pp. 887–913.

96 See the introduction in Louth (trans.), *Three Treatises*.

97 See Griffith, 'Theodore Abu Qurrah's Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images'. Griffith has also argued that around this time the Arab Christians living in the Levant were cut off from their orthodox counterparts in Constantinople, and goes so far as to refer to a 'Melkite' Church in juxtaposition with a 'Byzantine' Church, each coming to take on their own peculiar characteristics. If so, this would further aid in explaining Theodore's greater interest in his conquerors, as he may have been cut off from the theological events in Byzantium, such as, in this case, the resurgence of Iconoclasm during his own lifetime from 815–843. For Griffith's idea, see Griffith, 'Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam' and S. H. Griffith, 'What Has Constantinople to Do with Jerusalem? Palestine in the Ninth Century; Byzantine Orthodoxy in the World of Islam', in L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive? Papers from the Thirtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Ashgate, 1998), pp. 181–94.

dialogues, and that what we do have is essentially a recapitulation of much of the material Theodore used in his discussions. Theodore also wrote against the Armenians, and there is evidence that the work was translated into Armenian for the Armenians in Theodore's lifetime.[98] It thus seems that Theodore was concerned with very local events, in contrast to John, whose concerns reached well into the affairs of Christians living in far off lands.

Despite some of these differences, the similarities with John of Damascus Theodore shows in his attitudes toward Islam substantiate John's perspective on Islam as potentially quite accurate. Given Theodore's knowledge of Islam, we should similarly posit such a level of accuracy for John. Theodore's awareness of Islamic traditions was a product of his elite status as a bishop within the Orthodox community of the Middle East in the eighth century. While it is known that John held no such position as bishop, we have every reason to think that John would have been equally well informed of the practices of his overlords and of those for whom he worked in the early years of his life. John's reputation within the Chalcedonian Orthodox community of the Middle East as one of the leading theologians of his time, and his apparently close relations with the Ecclesiastical authorities of Palestine, place him in as effective a position to have learned about Islam as did Theodore.

Finally, we have seen that despite some differences in approach to Islam, Theodore Abu Qurra and John of Damascus share certain similarities which cannot likely be accounted for other than by accepting the dependence of Theodore on John, and this point further suggests John was valued as a source for Islam by Theodore. Both refer to an Arian as Muhammad's teacher, both are concerned to impugn Muhammad specifically rather than the book of the Qur'an, and both are reluctant to refer to Islam as 'heresy', even if John included the Ishmaelites in his book *On Heresies*. As I have presented them, these points are not common to many, if any, other theologians either in eighth and ninth centuries or later. Thus, we are in a good position to see how John influenced Theodore, and how Theodore elaborated his ideas based on his own experiences and education. Theodore's use of John as a source, and his own informed understanding of the Ishmaelites, both suggest that while John may not report on the normative Islam to which we are accustomed, he may well report accurately on the Islam with which he was familiar in its pre-classical state.

98 See Lamoreaux (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, p. 83, where the forward to the epistle has it sent by Thomas the patriarch of Jerusalem to the heretics of Armenia, and that it was composed in Arabic but translated by Michael, the "presbyter and syncellus of the apostolic throne of Jerusalem".

The difference in what they are trying to accomplish in their works and the genres they employ better explain why John might be seen as including Islam as an αἵρεσις while Theodore does not. Theodore is consistent in his use; he uses the term to refer to groups that have a close association with Christianity, and in many ways can be thought of as having come 'out of' the Church of which he saw himself a part. John, on the other hand, includes groups within the category of αἵρεσις that have had nothing to do with Christianity; groups both that came before Christianity, and groups that appeared after Christ but appear to have had no discernible relationship with him are found in his book. This is why we can find in John's book groups such as the *Heliotropites* (Heresy 89), whose 'heresy' is nothing other than that they venerate some plants and believe them to have a certain virtue in them, while Theodore does not refer to either Islam or Judaism in the same terms.

Conclusion

The Christians who first had contact with Muslims and the terminology they used to describe them deserve some of our most careful attention. This is if not least because they tended to set tones and trends that sometimes endured for centuries after them. The characterization of Islam as a 'Christian heresy' has been bandied about so long and with so much tacit assumption regarding that phrase's meaning that it has obscured not only our understandings of earliest Christian-Muslim relations, but those down the centuries as well.

The sectarian milieu in which John of Damascus grew up required of its inhabitants careful negotiation if particular identities were to continue to survive. Andrew Louth has already shown that part of John's contribution to the sources he used in writing the *De Fide Orthodoxa* was the inclusion of material that specifically singled out orthodox Christians from other religious groups in the Middle East at his time.[1] Cameron has recently written that late antique Christians operated with a 'capacious' definition of what constituted error.[2] But various definitions circulated for the term heresy in late antiquity, and this was as much the result of its wide use in antiquity and the contemporaneous culture as it was a result of Christian desire to exclude the 'other'. In the third century BC the term could be used to apply to an individual's attitude or disposition. Its use to describe medical schools in the two centuries before Christ, as well as philosophical schools in same period up until at least the late sixth century AD among Neoplatonists further evidences its flexibility.[3] Legal use of it was no different. Official legal texts into the fifth century could still use its Latin equivalent, *haeresis*, to refer to guilds of workers.[4] The Roman Empire was and remained a large place, full of competing ideologies, religious faiths, and sub-cultures each often operating with its own inherited and differing terminologies. Outside of its bounds, where John lived, an even greater proliferation of alternative religious ideologies abounded and communications in the multi-lingual environment of the Near East only fueled differing terminologies.

1 Louth, *St. John Damascene*, pp. 85–86 and 179–89.

2 A. Cameron, 'How to Read Heresiology', pp. 471–92.

3 See Glucker, *Antiochus* and E. Iricinschi and H. M. Zellentin, 'Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Heresiologies', in E. Iricinschi and H. M. Zellentin (eds.), *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 1–27 for a summary.

4 Humfress, 'Citizens and Heretics'.

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_008

The rise in the use of Neoplatonic philosophy in the service of Christian theology in Palestine coincided with the collapse of imperial control in the eastern provinces in the mid-sixth century. Boundary lines in the increasingly sectarian milieu of Palestine now needed additional clarification, as the Roman political authorities were no longer available to enforce or clarify where they stood. The imperial authorities attempted to exert control over the religious situation in the provinces right up until those provinces were lost in 636. This might best be seen in the installation of the Patriarch Cyrus in Egypt in 631. Heraclius endowed the new patriarch with the office of prefect of Alexandria. The simultaneous appointment of a bishop to the position of both prefect and patriarch was contrary to the ecclesiastical canons and ordinary Byzantine practice, but served the need of the empire to create religious harmony. The imposition of religious unity by force was impossible in divided Palestine, and attempts at compromise were made repeatedly by imperial authorities to draw and re-draw border lines establishing religious identities.[5]

In this respect the association of Islam with heresy could serve useful purposes. It is clear that some Christians in the Middle East sought to apply existing church legislation to their new situation and in some cases expanded it. Jacob of Edessa (c. 640–708) of the Miaphysite Syriac Church is reported to have taken a copy of the book of canons and burned it in front of the Patriarch as an insult to the latter's apparent disrespect for the church canons.[6] He is said to have lamented the fact that few in his day paid adequate attention to canons, and he greatly expanded on them.[7] It was also in the eighth century in Damascus that the first formal collection of canons made by the Armenian Church was assembled.[8] In the first half of the ninth century the Catholicos Timothy I of the Church of the East (780–823) held councils in Baghdad in an effort to codify his church's canon law.[9] Yet, it was the Melkites of Syria and Palestine, the church to which John belonged, who appear to have been the first to translate church canons from Greek into Arabic and begin putting them to use in

5 For the various attempts made by imperial authorities to mediate a compromise among differing religious factions in Palestine, see J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 296–323.

6 J. B. Chabot (ed.), *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche* (*1166–1199*) 5 vols. (Ernest Leroux, 1899–1924), 4:445–446, trans. 2:472.

7 See H. G. B. Teule, 'Jacob of Edessa and Canon Law', in B. T. Haar Romeny (ed.), *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of his Day* (Brill, 2008), pp. 83–100.

8 N. G. Garsoïan and J.-P. Mahé, *Des Parthes au Califat: Quatre leçons sur la formation de l'identité arménienne* (De Boccard, 1997), pp. 59–105.

9 T. Hurst, 'The Syriac Letters of Timothy I (727–823): A Study in Christian-Muslim Controversy', Ph.D. dissertation (Catholic University of America, 1986), p. 117.

the eighth century.[10] Doing so enabled them to better self-identify through the process of differentiating themselves from both the other Christians around them, who they considered heretics, as well as the Muslims, who, now thanks to John, could be similarly classed. By labeling the Ishmaelites as partakers of 'heresy', a whole body of church law could potentially be applied to them. This was not an insignificant body of law either. For John of Damascus in particular, the *Apostolic Canons*, which he appears to have regarded as having the authority of Scripture, contained several adjudications against associating too closely with heretics.[11]

John's heightened emphasis on the *Canons* as an authoritative document meant several things for the Christian community to which he wrote the *Fount*. Canon 45 ruled that any bishop, priest or deacon who prayed with heretics should be deposed, canon 62 declared that any clergy who denied Christ out of fear of a heretic should be cast out, and canon 64 stated that any clergy or laymen who entered into the prayer house of a heretic to pray should be deposed or excommunicated respectively. These canons were written to apply to heretics of the type who had willfully rejected the Church, but if necessary they could now also be applied to Muslims. This sharpening of Christian identity would fit well with the picture we have already received of what was happening between Christian groups at the time of the Arab conquest, and if the Ishmaelites could be fit into such a scheme, it would greatly facilitate dealing with them on a daily basis.

10 S. K. Samir, 'Christian Arabic Literature in the 'Abbasid Period', in M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbasid Period* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 446–69, especially 449–50.

11 The *Apostolic Canons* were a group of canons written in the fourth century, but long attributed to Clement, and received in some areas with the authority of Scripture. They themselves are one of the earliest (c. 380) witnesses to the received canon of Scriptures of the New Testament. It contains a list of books of the New Testament to be received, of which it may have counted itself as one. The manuscript tradition is not unanimous on the point, but John of Damascus appears to have thought the canons were to be regarded as part of Scripture, possibly on the basis of those canons being received at Trullo in canon 2 of that synod. Two Epistles of Clement, however, also listed in the canons but not explicitly excluded as were the Constitutions, are not listed by the Damascene, and he is certainly among only a very select few at this late date to count the canons as Scriptural. To my knowledge, no one has adequately treated this subject and how it could be that John included them in his list. For John's inclusion, see Kotter, *Die Schriften* vol. II, p. 211, ln. 76–77.

Within the empire in which Orthodoxy was identified with the state and where laws were crafted to exclude heresies for social reasons, those heretics who were excluded were those with whom the sanctioned church had fought in theological controversies such as at Nicaea.[12] Outside of those bounds theologians better remembered alternative definitions of αἵρεσις. Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century, and another so-called compiler and preserver of 'all knowledge', recalled an earlier definition of heresy that was more all-embracing than that which defined it according to departure from the Church. At the end of his heresiology, which included Christian heresies and Jewish heresies, and found in his mammoth work the *Etymologies*, he writes:

> These are the heresies that have arisen in opposition to the Catholic faith, and have been condemned by the Apostles and the Holy Fathers, or by the Councils. These heresies, although they disagree with each other, differing among themselves in many errors, nevertheless conspire with a common name against the Church of God. But also, whoever understands the Holy Scriptures otherwise than the meaning of the Holy Spirit, by whom they were written, even if he does not depart from the Church, nevertheless can be called a heretic.[13]

It was not therefore impossible for Christians to remember and make use of the category of heresy in ways not always identical to earlier practice.

The literary structure of texts such as John's and the cultural context in which they were written are crucial to a proper understanding of why a text was written, and what its author sought to accomplish. As is well known, texts were used as weapons, but the nature of the weapon depended on the need.[14] The use of heresiology as a categorizing discourse to defame the 'other' who came after Christ is well known, but its use as a world history, or a catalogue of all ideologies having come into the world is less well recognized. In John's attempt to preserve and systematically organize knowledge, it was obvious that the Ishmaelites needed to be included in such a work, as part of the history of Christian victory over such ideologies.

12 Paño, 'Social Exclusion of Heretics'.

13 S. A. Barney (ed.), *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 178 (8.5.70).

14 A. Cameron, 'Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages', in A. Bowman and G. Woolf (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 198–215.

To this end, John adopted and adapted the *Anacephalaeosis* of Epiphanius' *Panarion* in order to be as comprehensive as possible. Furthermore, only Epiphanius' model of heresiology as a universal history could fit John's purposes in categorizing the Ishmaelites as 'heresy'. As Epiphanius' heresiology starts at the beginning of creation it meant that John would have no trouble explaining the Ishmaelites' inclusion in a type of work that ordinarily would have appeared to receive only recent, post-Christian heresies. Linear progression was part of heresiological narrative. Any difficulty, therefore, in explaining how the age-old Ishmaelites could be conceived of as heresy was overcome by referring the reader back with the words 'still-prevailing', along with some historical information on who the Ishmaelites were in antiquity, combined with an update on that new direction that the Ishmaelites had now taken: the receiving into their midst a false prophet.

Traces of many of the elements of early Christian heresiology are present in John's heresiology and his work on Islam, but the influences he felt from other traditions around him were sufficiently strong that these affected his thinking regularly. Dialoguing continuously with his own culture, he received much of his material from outside the immediate bounds of the Christian Church, which he incorporated into a Christian outlook. I have dwelt above on three particular apparent divergent emphases found in John's work from earlier Christian heresiological traditions, but additional study would reveal more. The last twenty heresies in his book exhibit little to none of the succession characteristic otherwise found in the earlier heresiologies, nor does John follow a thematic arrangement as in the case with Theodoret of Cyrus, thought to be one of his own sources of information for his own heresiology.

John's departure from more typical Christian heresiological composition while at the same time making great use of one such type of heresiological composition within his tradition is perhaps another example of how the Damascene could be both traditional and original in his thought, creatively adapting a received tradition to meet current challenges. Prior understandings of heresy and heresiology worked as pressures placed on the author of a new heresiology to conform to earlier models both in and out of the Christian Church. Westerink has noted that the sixth/seventh century Neoplatonic philosophers of Alexandria from whom John ultimately received his definition of heresy had particular rules for identifying and describing a philosophical 'school of thought' or 'αἵρεσις' and how they derived their names. These were limited to seven: the founder's name, his native city or country, the locality where he taught, a particular style of life, its belief, accidental circumstances,

or finally its philosophy.[15] Although Westerink was concerned to analyze the Neoplatonic commentators of Alexandria, it must be observed that similar methods for arriving at the names of 'heresies' are older than they, and enjoyed limited Christian use. Clement of Alexandria, for example, in book 7 of the *Miscellanies*, writes of the heresies that:

> some receive their appellation from a [person's] name ... Some take their designation from a place, as the Peratici; some from a nation, as the [heresy] of the Phrygians; some from an action, as that of the Encratites; and some from peculiar dogmas, as that of the Docetae, and that of the Harmatites; and some from suppositions, and from individuals they have honoured, as those called Cainists, and the Ophians; and some from nefarious practices and enormities, as those of the Simonians called Entychites.[16]

Glucker has pointed out that the definition of αἵρεσις written in the Neoplatonic circles of sixth-century Alexandria and used by John retained its essentially abstract nature, and referred to the *opinions* of a group of people, and not to the group itself.[17] These 'opinions' of course, are characterized there in a non-Christian context, and so certainly may take on other meanings having been transmitted to the Christian community in eighth-century Palestine. But, the definition itself as it appears in the *Fount* has remained virtually intact, and indeed comports well with what we find in the *Anacephalaeosis*. The heresies in John's work, and those listed in the *Anacephalaeosis*, are reduced to simple ideological stances, where we read the bare opinions of the various groups, without additional qualification either that they departed from Christ, or in what manner; whether by the influence of demons, because of philosophical speculation, or another reason.

Such a set of circumstances as outlined above removes further obstacles to the view that the material John presents on Islam in his heresiology is an accurate reflection of historical circumstances. This, of course, cannot be extended to the *Anacephalaeosis*, as the heresies there are reductions from larger works, constructed on entirely different bases. Neither can we extend such a view to the other remaining 19 heresies John may have authored and attached to the *Anacephalaeosis,* as his reasons for having done so likely are for the purpose of adding the Ishmaelites at the end. But, although John considered Islam αἵρεσις,

15 Westerink, 'The Alexandrian Commentators', p. 342.

16 PG 9:552–54; trans. *Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 555.

17 Glucker, *Antiochus*, pp. 181–82.

we should not assume the typical understanding of what that term implies, and this does not necessarily mean that he was 'misinformed' or that he needed to "fit Islam into a Jewish-Christian frame of reference, rather than consider it in itself".[18] Further, the view that "our writer [John] takes it he [Muhammad] knew Christianity well enough to pick and choose and be a heretic" must be forsaken, both because it is an erroneous characterization of John's position, and because it distorts our view of Muhammad's own understanding of Christianity, and his relationship to the Christians around him.[19]

It is not known to what extent, if any, John used a Qurʾan or a version of it as one of his sources of information regarding Islam. Although it is highly likely John of Damascus knew Arabic, there is no unimpeachable evidence suggesting Christians in John's milieu had access to the Qurʾan, or even that they would have considered it a valuable source for information about Islam. Instead, there is some evidence to suggest that John may have taken some of his information on Islam from an early non-canonical version of the Qurʾan, and/or from local traditions independent of the Qurʾan. John of Damascus' version of the story of the she-camel and God shares certain characteristics with the version presented in the poetry of Umayya ibn Abi al-Salt, not found in other works. The authenticity and consequent dating of Umayya's poetry is still disputed, and until that dispute is resolved we will not be able to prove John could have learned of the version he presents by means other than a version of the Qurʾan. At the same time the version John presents is so different from that offered in the Qurʾan that it would be difficult to believe he used it as the source for his account. It seems more likely that John reproduced an oral account of this legend, some of which ultimately made it into the canonical version of the Qurʾan, albeit in a very different form, and dispersed throughout it.

Islamic religious traditions and rituals were not fixed by the time of the death of Muhammad, and John's analysis of these traditions falls well within the time frame that revisionist scholarship claims for the universal codification of Islamic rituals, if indeed we can claim that this has happened. Gerald

18 J.-M. Gaudeul, *Encounters & Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History*, 2 vols. (Pontificio istituto di studi arabi e d'islamistica, 1984), p. 29.

19 King, 'S. Joannis Damasceni De haeresibus cap. CI and Islam', p. 80. The vocabulary in English translations of John's work should probably be altered to reflect this difference. Following Williams' translation of αἵρεσις in Epiphanius' *Panarion* as 'sect', it seems reasonable to advise a similar translation in John's work on the religion of the Ishmaelites: what is today known as 'Islam'. See Williams (trans.), *The Panarion I*, pp. xxiv–xxv. Williams addresses the issue head on in his introduction to volume I of his translation. I have covered this material in chapter 1.

Hawting's work in particular on early Islamic ritual has shown that both the terms used in the Islamic sources to describe rituals and those used to describe ritual artifacts continued to develop well after the death of the Prophet, as did the rituals themselves.[20] Some of these traditions, on which John reports, such as those surrounding Abraham and the different stones around the Kaʿba in Mecca, as well as female circumcision, can be shown still to be in a state of development at the early time John was writing, and according to the Islamic sources were not uniformly practiced. Others, such as the number of rivers in paradise and their type, were not recorded in the earliest Islamic sources such as the earliest *sīra* and *ḥadīth*, but were clearly understood by the Christians reporting on them to have varied.[21] The inconsistency in kinds of rivers in paradise reported by Theophanes, John of Damascus, and in the Leo-ʿUmar correspondence lessens the likelihood that this tradition was fixed from an early date.

Finally, a close comparison of John's work with that of his immediate successor, Theodore Abu Qurrah/John the Deacon, further substantiates some of John's assertions as potentially valuable and accurate observations about Islam. Theodore's reproduction of the idea that Muhammad studied under an Arian monk suggests the influence of John on Theodore or at least the larger Chalcedonian Orthodox community in which Theodore would have received these ideas. As for the claim of Muhammad's Arian tutelage, although the belief system itself may have disappeared by the time John wrote his work, Theodore's repetition of John's assertion goes to support the view that John's work was valued as a source from a very early period. Other understandings of how Muhammed learned of Christianity clearly circulated, and alternatives such as that he learned from a Nestorian monk in particular were available. Yet there are few authors who could have been as well informed regarding Islam as Theodore, and his use of this idea is thus significant; in Byzantine and Western sources Arian influence was usually combined with other heresies to account for Muhammad's theology, or replaced altogether.

---

20 See Hawting's introduction, and the collection of articles in G.R. Hawting, *The Development of Islamic Ritual* (Ashgate, 2006).

21 I was not able to carefully consult the later *tafsīr* literature to analyze whether some traditions have three rivers listed in paradise, while others four, and their type etc. in commentary on Sura 47:15, in which the four rivers appear. Further, as noted above in chapter 4, the earliest collection of *ḥadīth*, the *Muwatta'* of Malik, has numerous recensions, and no effort has been made to consult these for possible allusions to the rivers, although I believe such allusion is unlikely given the editions which have appeared thus far.

Ultimately we can conclude that there is no credible reason to distrust the Damascene's account of Islam, and in fact there are good reasons for accepting it. While we cannot go as far as some scholars have attempted to go in trusting John's accounts (or others in discounting them), it is clear that John's observations have warranted another appraisal of him as a source for early Islamic practice and belief. He shows no extreme animus toward Muslims, nor can the claim that he attempted to intentionally distort Islamic beliefs and practices be supported by careful consideration of the evidence. At the same time, it cannot be shown that he knew or used the Qur'an, nor that he certainly understood every Islamic tradition he witnessed. The rivers in paradise are, perhaps, a case in point. While there is no evidence John misunderstood Islamic tradition by assuming there to be three rivers in paradise, neither is there firm evidence that he reflected Islamic beliefs as they were held in his time. The matter must be left open until such time when a better understanding of the Islamic tradition is reached. Such may also be said for the whole of John's treatise, which both contributes to, and benefits from, a better establishment of the historical record for early- to mid-eighth century Syria/Palestine and the study of relations between Christians and Muslims in late antiquity and the early middle ages.

APPENDIX 1

Greek Text and English Translation of ‘On Heresies 100’

(100) ρʹ Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν κρατοῦσα λαοπλανὴς θρησκεία τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν πρόδρομος οὖσα τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου. Κατάγεται δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰσμαὴλ τοῦ ἐκ τῆς Ἄγαρ τεχθέντος τῷ Ἀβραάμ· διόπερ Ἀγαρηνοὶ καὶ Ἰσμαηλῖται προσαγορεύονται. Σαρακηνοὺς δὲ αὐτοὺς καλοῦσιν ὡς ἐκ τῆς Σάρρας κενοὺς διὰ τὸ εἰρῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς Ἄγαρ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ· Σάρρακενήν με ἀπέλυσεν.

Οὗτοι μὲν οὖν εἰδωλολατρήσαντες καὶ προσκυνήσαντες τῷ ἑωσφόρῳ ἄστρῳ καὶ τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ, ἣν δὴ καὶ Χαβὰρ τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἐπωνόμασαν γλώσσῃ, ὅπερ σημαίνει μεγάλη.

Ἕως μὲν οὖν τῶν Ἡρακλείου χρόνων προφανῶς εἰδωλολάτρουν, ἀφ᾽ οὗ χρόνου καὶ δεῦρο ψευδοπροφήτης αὐτοῖς ἀνεφύη Μάμεδ ἐπονομαζόμενος, ὃς τῇ τε παλαιᾷ καὶ νέᾳ διαθήκῃ περιτυχών, ὁμοίως ἀρειανῷ προσομιλήσας δῆθεν μοναχῷ ἰδίαν συνεστήσατο αἵρεσιν. Καὶ προφάσει τὸ δοκεῖν θεοσεβείας τὸ ἔθνος εἰσποιησάμενος, ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γραφὴν ὑπὸ θεοῦ κατενεχθῆναι ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν διαθρυλλεῖ. Τινὰ δὲ συντάγματα ἐν τῇ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ βίβλῳ χαράξας γέλωτος ἄξια τὸ σέβας αὐτοῖς οὕτω παραδίδωσι.

---

100 cf. Khoury; Sahas 65 1–148 repet. Nicetas Chon., Thes. 20, 1–7: MPG 140, 105A–113A 9 1–25 Doctr. Patr. 270, 14–16 1–3 ByF 4 (1972) 4158 2 πρόδρομος Sahas 69; Barnard 29 ἀντιχρ. Expos. 99 3 v. 100, 81 Ἀγαρηνοί P. Khoury 52 Σαρακ. Christides 331; Sahas 71 8s v. 100, 92s; P. Khoury 53; Sahas 86–88 8 Ἡρακλείου P. Khoury 314 9 ψευδοπρ. 100, 35. 42. 47. 126. 141; P. Khoury 315. 328 12–156 Byz. 10 (1935) 93, 13–94, 13 ab i. 9 διαθήκῃ 48, 2!

CDPQRSTU(W)

---

100 1 ρʹ] ραʹ U om. S ρʹ — 3 προσαγορεύονται] Περὶ τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν, οἵ καὶ Ἰσμαηλῖται λέγονται W ρʹ add. Ἡ αἵρεσις ρʹ τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν Q ἡ om. S λαοπλάνος RT -πλάνου S 2 ἀπὸ] ὑπὸ CQ ἀπὸ τοῦ] ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ D 3 τῷ] τοῦ U om. Q καὶ om. D Ἰσμαηλῖται add. ἐκ τῆς Σάρρας T προσαγορεύονται — ὡς adscr. i. m. T ἑαυτοὺς W 4 Σάρρας] Ἄγαρ S κενοὺς — 6 καὶ] μετονομασθέντας τὸ δουλικὸν ἀποφεύγοντες ὄνομα, ἐτράπησαν δὲ Ἑλληνισμὸν W 4 ἀγγέλῳ add. ὅτι S 6 εἰδώλῳ λατρήσαντες D 7 Χάβαρ C Χαβὲρ U αὐτῶν P γλώσσᾳ Q μεγάλην U 8 οὖν om. U ἀρ᾽ οὗ χρόνου] ἀπὸ δὲ Ἡρακλείου UW οὗ add. δὲ R 9 Μάμμεδ T Μάμεθ U 9/10 ὃς add. περιτυχὼν Ἑβραίοις καὶ χριστιανοῖς, δῆθεν Ἀρειανοῖς καὶ Νεστοριανοῖς πανταχόθεν ἕν ἀρυσάμενος, ἐξ Ἰουδαίων μὲν μοναρχίαν, ἐξ Ἀρειανῶν δὲ λόγον καὶ πνεῦμα κτιστά, ἀπὸ δὲ Νεστοριανῶν ἀνθρωπολατρείαν· ἑαυτῷ θρησκείαν περιποιεῖται καὶ προφάσει δῆθεν θεοσεβείας τὸ ἔθνος εἰσποιησάμενος U ὃς sequ. περιτυχὼν — ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι = Byzantion 10 (1935) 93 lin. 13–94 lin. 13 ab. inf., sed in multis melius, deinde Χριστιανοκατήγοροι (MPG 94, 773, 6–21) et περὶ Ἀποσχιστῶν (776,2–777,16) etc. W 9 νέᾳ] καινῇ U Ἀρειανοῖς D

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_009

There is up to now the still-prevailing people-deceiving practice [θρησκεία] of the Ishmaelites, being the forerunner of the Antichrist. It takes its origin from Ishmael, who was born to Abraham from Hagar, and for this reason they are called Hagarenes and Ishmaelites. They also call them Saracens, allegedly for having been sent away by Sarah empty; for Hagar said to the angel, 'Sarah has sent me away empty'.

These people worshiped and venerated the morning star and Aphrodite, whom they themselves called Habar in their own language, which means 'great'. Therefore they were clearly idolaters until the time of Heraclius, from which time a false prophet appeared to them named Muhammad, who chanced upon the Old and New Testaments, and conversing in like manner with an Arian monk, introduced a sect of his own. And on the pretext of having made himself seem a God-fearing person to the people, he reported that a Scripture was brought down to him from heaven by God. So having put together some sayings in his book, worthy of laughter, he thus handed the object of wonder down to them.

Λέγει ἕνα θεὸν εἶναι ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων, μήτε γεννηθέντα μήτε γεγεννηκότα. Λέγει τὸν Χριστὸν λόγον εἶναι τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, κτιστὸν δὲ καὶ δοῦλον, καὶ ὅτι ἐκ Μαρίας, τῆς ἀδελφῆς Μωσέως καὶ Ἀαρών, ἄνευ σπορᾶς ἐτέχθη. Ὁ γὰρ λόγος, φησί, τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Μαρίαν, καὶ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰησοῦν προφήτην ὄντα καὶ δοῦλον τοῦ θεοῦ. Καὶ ὅτι οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι παρανομήσαντες ἠθέλησαν αὐτὸν σταυρῶσαι καὶ κρατήσαντες ἐσταύρωσαν τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐσταυρώθη, φησίν, οὔτε ἀπέθανεν· ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔλαβεν αὐτὸν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν διὰ τὸ φιλεῖν αὐτόν. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ λέγει, ὅτι, τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀνελθόντος εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς, ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς λέγων· Ὦ Ἰησοῦ, σὺ εἶπας, ὅτι υἱός εἰμι τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ θεός; Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη, φησίν, ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἵλεώς μοι, κύριε· σὺ οἶδας, ὅτι οὐκ εἶπον οὐδὲ ὑπερηφανῶ εἶναι δοῦλός σου· ἀλλ' οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ παραβάται ἔγραψαν, ὅτι εἶπον τὸν λόγον τοῦτον, καὶ ἐψεύσαντο κατ' ἐμοῦ, καί εἰσι πεπλανημένοι. Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη, φησίν, αὐτῷ ὁ θεός· Οἶδα, ὅτι σὺ οὐκ ἔλεγες τὸν λόγον τοῦτον.

Καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ τερατολογῶν ἐν τῇ τοιαύτῃ συγγραφῇ γέλωτος ἄξια, ταύτην πρὸς θεοῦ ἐπ' αὐτὸν κατενεχθῆναι φρυάττεται. Ἡμῶν δὲ λεγόντων· Καὶ τίς ἐστιν ὁ μαρτυρῶν, ὅτι γραφὴν αὐτῷ δέδωκεν ὁ θεός, ἢ τίς τῶν προφητῶν προεῖπεν, ὅτι τοιοῦτος ἀνίσταται προφήτης, καὶ διαπορούντων αὐτοῖς, ὡς ὁ Μωσῆς τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸ Σινὰ ὄρος ἐπόψεσι παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, ἐν νεφέλῃ καὶ πυρὶ καὶ γνόφῳ καὶ θυέλλῃ φανέντος ἐδέξατο τὸν νόμον, καὶ ὅτι πάντες οἱ

10 ἀρειανῷ P. Khoury 54; Sahas 73 συνεστήσατο 100, 15s αἵρεσιν P. Khoury 314. 331 11 P. Khoury 54s. 315ss. 324 γραφὴν 100, 33. 44. 58 13 κατενεχθ. 100, 44. 49 14 Coran. 112, 1. 3; F 1, 3; 26, 6 = 69s; S 5, 8; Coran. 4, 171 (169); P. Khoury 58 16 κτιστόν 64, 3; Coran. 3, 59 (52) δοῦλον 100, 21; Coran. 4, 172 (170); 43, 59 (59); Expos. 65, 21–33 ἐκ Μαρίας Coran. e. gr. 4. 171 (169); 19, 34 (35); 43, 57 (57); P. Khoury 58 17 ἀδελφῆς Coran. 19, 27 (28)s ἄνευ σπορᾶς P. Khoury 58 17s Coran. 4, 171 (169); 19, 16 (16)—21 (21) 18 δοῦλον 100, 191 22/23s cf. P. Khoury 58 Coran. 4, 172 (170)

(CC[1])DPQRSTU

10 δῆθεν post 11 ἀρειανῷ CP om. D μοναχῷ om. D τὸ[2] corr. in τῷ D τὸ ἔθνος θεοσ. coll. S 11/12 κατενεχθῆναι ante γραφὴν P 11 γραφὴν eras. C ὑπὸ θεοῦ om. PS 12 ἐπ' αὐτὸν] ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν D αὐτῷ U ἐ ‖ ἐπ' P mutans lin. δὲ om. D συγγράμματα ST διαχαράξας ST 15 εἶναι post ὅλων ST γεγενηκότα T γεννήσαντα Q 17 τῆς — Ἀαρών om. D φησί om. U 18 εἰσῆλθον R Ἰησοῦν] νἱὸν D Χριστὸν S 19 οἱ om. PQST, suppl. P[e] ἠθέλησαν — κρατήσαντες om., sed suppl. i. m. T 20 φησίν ante οὐκ S οὔτε] οὐδὲ U 21 πρὸς — οὐρανὸν] φησίν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν S τὸν οὐρανὸν Q θεὸς om. D 23 εἶπας add. τὸν λόγον τοῦτον U εἰμι . . τοῦ P καὶ θεὸς om. D φησίν om. S ὁ om. SU κύριε add. μου RTU 24 ἀλλὰ S ἄνθρωποι οἱ παρ.] παραβάται ἄνθρωποι D 24 ὅτι εἶπον om. S 24 Καὶ[3] om. RT 26 τέρατο//λογῶν T γραφῇ SU 26/27 ταύτην — φρυάττεται om. U

He says that there is one God, maker of all, neither begotten nor having begotten. He says that Christ is the Word of God, and his Spirit, but created and a servant, and that he was born without seed from Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron. For, he says, the Word of God and the Spirit entered into Mary and she gave birth to Jesus who was a prophet and a servant of God. And that the Jews, being transgressors of the Law, wanted to crucify him and seizing him they crucified his shadow, but Christ himself, was not crucified, they say, nor did he die; for God took him up to himself in heaven because he loved him. And he says this, that when Christ went up into the heavens God questioned him saying: "O Jesus, did you say that 'I am Son of God, and God'?" And Jesus answered, it is said: "Be merciful to me, Lord; you know that I neither said this, nor will I boast that I am your servant; but men who are transgressors wrote that I said this, and said lies against me and they have been deceived." And God, it is said, answered him: "I know that you did not say this."

And although there are included in this collection many more absurd stories worthy of laughter, he insists that this was brought down to him from God. But we say: "And who is the witness, that God gave the Scripture to him, or which of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would arise?" And being at a loss, since Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people when God appeared in cloud and

προφῆται ἀπὸ Μωσέως καὶ καθεξῆς περὶ τῆ τοιοῦτος ς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας προηγόρευσαν καὶ ὅτι θεὸς ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ θεοῦ υἱὸς σαρκούμενος ἥξει καὶ σταυρωθησόμενος θνῄσκων καὶ ἀναστησόμενος καὶ ὅτι κριτὴς οὗτος ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν, καὶ λεγόντων ἡμῶν, πῶς οὐχ οὕτως ἦλθεν ὁ προφήτης ὑμῶν, ἄλλων μαρτυρούντων περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ παρόντων ὑμῶν ὁ θεός, ὡς τῷ Μωσεῖ βλέποντος παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, καπνιζομένου τοῦ ὄρους δέδωκε τὸν νόμον, κἀκείνῳ τὴν γραφήν, ἥν φατε, παρέσχεν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ βέβαιον ἔχητε, ἀποκρίνονται, ὅτι ὁ θεός, ὅσα θέλει, ποιεῖ. Τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, φαμέν, οἴδαμεν, ἀλλ', ὅπως ἡ γραφὴ κατῆλθεν εἰς τὸν προφήτην ὑμῶν, ἐρωτῶμεν. Καὶ ἀποκρίνονται, ὅτι, ἐν ὅσῳ κοιμᾶται, κατέβη ἡ γραφὴ ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. Καὶ τὸ γελοιῶδες πρὸς αὐτοὺς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς, ὅτι λοιπόν, ἐπειδὴ κοιμώμενος ἐδέξατο τὴν γραφὴν καὶ οὐκ ᾔσθετο τῆς ἐνεργείας, εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπληρώθη τὸ τῆς δημώδους παροιμίας. Πάλιν ἡμῶν ἐρωτώντων· Πῶς αὐτοῦ ἐντειλαμένου ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ γραφῇ ὑμῶν μηδὲν ποιεῖν ἢ δέχεσθαι ἄνευ μαρτύρων, οὐκ ἠρωτήσατε αὐτόν, ὅτι πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἀπόδειξον διὰ μαρτύρων, ὅτι προφήτης εἶ καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθες, καὶ ποία γραφὴ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ σοῦ, σιωπῶσιν αἰδούμενοι. Πρὸς οὓς εὐλόγως φαμέν· Ἐπειδὴ γυναῖκα γῆμαι οὐκ ἔξεστιν ὑμῖν ἄνευ μαρτύρων οὐδὲ ἀγοράζειν οὐδὲ κτᾶσθαι, οὔτε δὲ ὑμεῖς αὐτοὶ καταδέχεσθε ὄνους ἢ κτῆνος ἀμάρτυρον ἔχειν, ἔχετε μὲν καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ κτήματα καὶ ὄνους καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ διὰ μαρτύρων,

28 cf. P. Khoury 318. 332s 33 v. 100, 49! 28 πρὸς θεοῦ P. Khoury 55. 316 29 φρυάττ. 100, 134 μαρτυρῶν 100, 42 36ss v. 100, 43–45; P. Khoury 327 43–45 v. 100, 36–39 43s Lv 26, 46 44 v. 100, 49! 39 θέλει F 27, 12! κατῆλθεν 100, 49! 40 κοιμᾶται 100, 49. 60. 144; P. Khoury 55. 316. 326s 41 κοιμώμενος 100, 48! ἐδέξατο 100, 15. 33. 44. 47s 43 ἄνευ μαρτύρων 100, 58 44 διὰ μαρτ. 100, 34. 42; P. Khoury 60 46 αἰδούμενοι 100, 87 58 v. 100, 52

(CC[1])DPQRSTU

28 αὐτοῦ R αὐτὸν emend. (ex. αὐτῷ ?) T κατενηνέχθαι DS Ἡμῶν — 44 ἥν a manu succedente C[1] 28 ὁ θεός om. S 30 προεῖπεν] εἶπε πρὸ αὐτοῦ S τοιοῦτος οὗτος S 29 διαπορούντων] δὴ ἀπορούντων ἡμῶν et i. m. adscr. λέγομεν αὐτοῖς T αὐτοῖς] αὐτῶν λέγομεν D αὐτῶν U τοῦ θεοῦ om. S κατὰ – ὄρος] καὶ τοῦ Σινᾶ ὄρους U ἐπόψει U ἐπόψεσι – 30 φανέντος post νόμον τοῦ θεοῦ (cf. 30) S 29 ἐν — λαοῦ om. PQ νεφέλαις D 32 πυρὶ pr. ἐν R φανέντος] φάνεντος S add. τοῦ θεοῦ U νόμον add. τοῦ θεοῦ S καὶ[4] add. οἱ D 33 καθεξῆς add. ἀρξάμενοι U τοῦ om. RU 34 θνῄσκων] τεθνηξόμενος U om. C1 ἀνιοτάμενος S 35 οὗτος om. C1 coll. post ζώντων D 37 παντὸς om. D 38 γραφήν add. ποθ (. .) D 38/45 ἥν—παρέσχεν] παρέσχεν ἥν ὑμεῖς φατε S 45 φατε redit C pro C1 καὶ] κἂν CPQS ἔχετε D ἔχετε PQ εἴχεται C 39 θέλει add. καὶ S οἴδαμεν om. U pr. καὶ S ἀλλ', ὅπως] ἀλλὰ πῶς S 40 ἡμῶν R ἐρωτῶμεν] αἰτῶμεν D ἐκοιμάτον D Καὶ add. τότε D 41 τὸ γελοιῶδες] γελοιωδῶς S 42 ἐδέξατο] ἔλαβεν U αἴσθετο CQ 43 δημώδους om. U παροιμίας add. σχό(λιον) ἀπ(ό)κ(ρισις) D Πάλιν om. R ὑμῶν S ἐρωτώντων add. ὅτι U ὑμῖν om. STU μηδὲ D ἢ] μηδὲ U 44 ὅτι[1] om. D ὑπόδειξον CD 45 εἶ add. οὐ S 46 σιωπῶσιν αἰδούμενοι] σιωπῶ εἶναιδούμενοι(!) Q pr. καὶ S φαμέν rel. huius cap. om. D (sequ. MPG 94, 773, 6–21) γῆμαι post ἔξεστιν S ἔστιν P ὑμῖν R] ἡμῖν U ὑμᾶς CPQ om. ST

fire and darkness and storm, and that all the prophets from Moses onward foretold of the coming of Christ and that Christ is God and that the Son of God will come in the flesh and that he will be crucified, die and rise again and that he will be the judge of the living and the dead, we say, "How is it that your prophet did not come this way, with others bearing witness about him, but neither did God, in your presence, as with Moses in the sight of all of the people when he gave the law to him while all were looking and the mountain was in smoke, give him as well, as you claim, the Scripture, so that you too, have certainty?", they reply that God does what he wills. "This", we say to them, "we know, but how did the Scripture come down to your prophet is what we are asking". And they answer that, while he was asleep the Scripture came down upon him. And we say to them in jest that, since he received the Scripture while sleeping and did not have a sense of the activity it is in him that the folk proverb was fulfilled. Again we ask them, "How is it that being commanded in your Scripture neither to do nor receive anything without witnesses, you did not ask him: 'you first prove with witnesses that you are a prophet and that you came from God, and which Scripture witnesses about you'", (and) being ashamed they remain silent. We thoughtfully say to them: "since you

μόνην δὲ πίστιν καὶ γραφὴν ἀμάρτυρον ἔχετε· ὁ γὰρ ταύτην ὑμῖν παραδοὺς οὐδαμόθεν ἔχει τὸ βέβαιον οὐδέ τις προμάρτυς ἐκείνου γνωρίζεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ κοιμώμενος ἐδέξατο ταύτην.

Καλοῦσι δὲ ἡμᾶς ἑταιριαστάς, ὅτι, φησίν, ἑταῖρον τῷ θεῷ παρεισάγομεν λέγοντες εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν θεοῦ καὶ θεόν. Πρὸς οὕς φαμεν, ὅτι τοῦτο οἱ προφῆται καὶ ἡ γραφὴ παραδέδωκεν· ὑμεῖς δέ, ὡς διισχυρίζεσθε, τοὺς προφήτας δέχεσθε. Εἰ οὖν κακῶς λέγομεν τὸν Χριστὸν θεοῦ υἱόν, ἐκεῖνοι ἐδίδαξαν καὶ παρέδωκαν ἡμῖν. Καί τινες μὲν αὐτῶν φασιν, ὅτι ἡμεῖς τοὺς προφήτας ἀλληγορήσαντες τοιαῦτα προστεθείκαμεν, ἄλλοι δέ φασιν, ὅτι οἱ Ἑβραῖοι μισοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἐπλάνησαν ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν προφητῶν γράψαντες, ἵνα ἡμεῖς ἀπολώμεθα.

Πάλιν δέ φαμεν πρὸς αὐτούς· Ὑμῶν λεγόντων, ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς λόγος ἐστὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πνεῦμα, πῶς λοιδορεῖτε ἡμᾶς ὡς ἑταιριαστάς; Ὁ γὰρ λόγος καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἀχώριστόν ἐστι τοῦ ἐν ᾧ πέφυκεν· εἰ οὖν ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐστιν ὡς λόγος αὐτοῦ, δῆλον, ὅτι καὶ θεός ἐστιν. Εἰ δὲ ἐκτός ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ, ἄλογός ἐστι καθ' ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἄπνους. Οὐκοῦν φεύγοντες ἑταιριάζειν τὸν θεὸν ἐκόψατε αὐτόν. Κρεῖσσον γὰρ ἦν λέγειν ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἑταῖρον ἔχει, ἢ κόπτειν αὐτὸν καὶ ὡς λίθον ἢ ξύλον ἤ τι τῶν ἀναισθήτων παρεισἔχει, ἢ κόπτειν αὐτὸν καὶ ὡς λίθον ἢ ξύλον ἤ τι τῶν ἀναισθήτων παρεισάγειν. Ὥστε ὑμεῖς μὲν ἡμᾶς ψευδηγοροῦντες ἑταιριαστὰς καλεῖτε· ἡμεῖς δὲ κόπτας ὑμᾶς προσαγορεύομεν τοῦ θεοῦ.

---

55 ἑταιριαστάς 100, 70. 73. 76; P. Khoury 56. 62; Sahas 81s 62 Coran. 4, 171 (169); N 42, 36 69s v. 100, 18 71 T 7, 20s!; J 78, 36 65 θεός N 1, 81 64 et 69 ἑταιρ. 100, 61! 67 et 70 ἐκόψατε P. Khoury 319. 335; Sahas 82

C(D)PQRSTU

---

47 οὐδὲ[2] οὔτε P καταδέχεσθαι CPQ ὄνους pr. ἢ P μὲν add. γὰρ U μὲν — 49 ἔχετε om. P 49 μόνην—ἀμάρτυρον om. ST ἀμάρτυρον—ὑμῖν] ὁ R γὰρ] δὲ S 50 οὐδέ] εἰ δὲ P προμάρτυς RT πρόμαρτυς CQ μάρτυς PSU ἐκείνου] αὐτοῦ S ταύτην] αὐτήν PQU 55 ἑταιριαστάς PU] ἑτεριστάς R ἑτεριαστάς rel. φησίν U ἑταῖρον PU] ἕτερον rel. 56 Χριστὸν et θεοῦ καὶ om. U καὶ ἡ γραφὴ om. ST παραδέδωκεν] -καν TU δώκασιν S διισχυρίζεσθαι CQT διισχυρεῖσθαι P 57 δέχεσθαι CQT θεοῦ υἱόν CP (sic corr. i. m.)QR] υἱὸν θεοῦ P υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ TU υἱὸν θεοῦ καὶ θεόν S 58 παρέδωκαν add. (et eras. ?) καὶ P φησίν PU ἡμεῖς—59 ὅτι om. P προστεθήκαμεν CQ δὲ om. R φασιν om. U Ἑβραῖοι add. οἱ S 60 ἵν' ἡμᾶς R 63 ἑαυτούς S πνεῦμα add. αὐτοῦ U ἑταιριαστάς PU] ἑτερ- CQS ἑτεριστάς RT 65 ὡς add. et del. ca 8 litt. T δηλονότι S 66 ἑταιριάζειν PU] ἑτερ- rel. 67 ἐκκόψατε S λέγειν post 67 ἔχει U ὅτι om. U ἕτερον CQRST ἔχει] ἔχειν U εἰπεῖν P 69 ψευδηγοροῦντας S ἑτεριαστὰς CQRST καλεῖται CQS 70 σκόπτας R

are not allowed to marry a woman without witnesses, nor buy something, nor acquire property, nor even allow yourselves to have an ass or an animal without witnesses, (and) you have women and property, and asses and everything else through witnesses, you have only your faith and your Scripture without a witness. For the one who handed this down to you has no certification from anywhere, nor is any one known who witnessed this coming, but instead he received this while sleeping.

They also call us Associators, because, it is said, we introduce beside God an associate to Him when we say that Christ is the Son of God and God. To whom we respond, that the prophets and the Scripture have handed this down to us and you, as you confidently affirm, accept the prophets. If, therefore, we wrongly say that Christ is the Son of God—they taught and handed those things down to us. And some of them say that we added such things, having allegorized the prophets. But others say that the Jews, hating us, deceived us by writing things as though from the prophets so that we might get led astray.

Again, we respond to them: "You say that Christ is the Word and Spirit of God, so how do you abuse us as Associators? For the Word and the Spirit are inseparable from the one in whom they were brought forth. If, therefore, the Word is in God it is clear that he is also God. But if it is outside of God, then God is without word and, according to you, without spirit. Thus, having avoided making associates to God you have mutilated Him. For it would be better for you to say that he has an associate than to mutilate him as if he were a stone, or wood, or to introduce him as some other inanimate object. So while you falsely call us Associators, we call you mutilators of God".

Διαβάλλουσι δὲ ἡμᾶς ὡς εἰδωλολάτρας προσκυνοῦντας τὸν σταυρόν, ὃν καὶ βδελύττονται. Καί φαμεν πρὸς αὐτούς· Πῶς οὖν ὑμεῖς λίθῳ προστρίβεσθε κατὰ τὸν Χαβαθὰν ὑμῶν καὶ φιλεῖτε τὸν λίθον ἀσπαζόμενοι; Καί τινες αὐτῶν φασιν, ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ τὸν Ἀβραὰμ συνουσιάσαι τῇ Ἄγαρ, ἄλλοι δέ, ὅτι ἐπ' αὐτὸν προσέδησε τὴν κάμηλον μέλλων θύειν τὸν Ἰσαάκ. Καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀποκρινόμεθα· Τῆς γραφῆς λεγούσης, ὅτι ὄρος ἦν ἀλσῶδες καὶ ξύλα, ἀφ' ὧν καὶ εἰς τὴν ὁλοκάρπωσιν σχίσας ὁ Ἀβραὰμ ἐπέθηκε τῷ Ἰσαάκ, καὶ ὅτι μετὰ τῶν παίδων τὰς ὄνους κατέλιπεν. Πόθεν οὖν ὑμῖν τὸ ληρεῖν; Οὐ γὰρ ἐκεῖσε ξύλα δρυμώδη κεῖται οὔτε ὄνοι διοδεύουσιν. Αἰδοῦνται μέν, ὅμως φασὶν εἶναι τὸν λίθον τοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Εἶτά φαμεν· Ἔστω τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, ὡς ὑμεῖς ληρεῖτε· τοῦτον οὖν ἀσπαζόμενοι, ὅτι μόνον ὁ Ἀβραὰμ ἐπ' αὐτὸν συνουσίασε γυναικὶ ἢ ὅτι τὴν κάμηλον προσέδησεν, οὐκ αἰδεῖσθε, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς εὐθύνετε, ὅτι τὸν σταυρὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσκυνοῦμεν, δι' οὗ δαιμόνων ἰσχὺς καὶ διαβόλου καταλέλυται πλάνη. Οὗτος δέ, ὅν φασι λίθον, κεφαλὴ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἐστίν, ᾗ προσεκύνουν, ἣν δὴ καὶ Χαβὰρ προσηγόρευον, ἐφ' ὃν καὶ μέχρι νῦν ἐγγλυφίδος ἀποσκίασμα τοῖς ἀκριβῶς κατανοοῦσι φαίνεται.

Οὗτος ὁ Μάμεδ πολλάς, ὡς εἴρηται, ληρωδίας συντάξας ἑκάστῃ τούτων προσηγορίαν ἐπέθηκεν, οἷον ἡ γραφὴ «τῆς γυναικὸς» καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τέσσαρας γυναῖκας προφανῶς λαμβάνειν νομοθετεῖ καὶ παλλακάς, ἐὰν δύνηται, χιλίας, ὅσας ἡ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ κατάσχῃ ὑποκειμένας ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων γυναικῶν. Ἣν δ' ἂν βουληθῇ ἀπολύειν, ἣν ἐθελήσειε, καὶ κομίζεσθαι ἄλλην,

---

77 v. 74 78 v. 100, 90; Expos. 84, 69 72 Χαβαθὰν P. Khoury 61; Sahas 86s. 871 74 = 89 Ἄγαρ 100, 3 84s Gn 22, 3 78 Αἰδοῦνται 100, 54 79 ληρεῖτε 100, 95. 130. 152; P. Khoury 318 89 = 81 80 σταυρόν 100, 78 91 Expos. 84, 42! 92s v. 100, 8! 96–148 P. Khoury 60. 320. 336 96–99 Coran. 4, Tit.; 4, 3 (3) 90 ἀπολύειν 100, 108 100–107 Coran. 33, 37–40

(C)PQRSTU

---

71 ὃν καὶ βδελύττονται] καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα (add. τοῦ S) Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν ἁγίων ST 72 Γαβαθὰν T Γαβαθ(ὰ) S βαχθὰν U Χαβοθὰν CPQ Χαβοθὰν R 73 αὐτῶν] αὐτῷ CQ τὸν Ἀ. συνουσιάσαι] συνουσιᾶσθε τὸν Ἀβραὰμ S συνουσιᾶσθαι R 74 ὅτι om. T προέδησε P 75 ἀποκρινόμεθα] λέγομεν U καὶ^2 om. ST ὅτι] πρός S κατέλειπεν PS οὖν om. SU 77 Οὐ] οὔτε U κεῖνται U οὔτε] οὐδὲ S 78 ὅμως add. δὲ U τὸν λίθον εἶναι coll. P Εἶτα—79 Ἀβραὰμ om. S τοῦτο PQ τοῦ (τον expl. mutile C ὁ om. T αὐτῶν γυναικὶ συνουσιᾶσαι S ἢ] καὶ ST 80 εὐθύναι Q 81 προσκυνοῦμεν add. καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ ST 82 ᾗ] ἣν U ἧς T Χαβὲρ U προσαγορεύουσιν U ἐκγλυφίδος U γλυφίδος T, sed suppl. ἐγ ἀποσκιάσματι S 83 κατανοοῦσι νοῆσαι S 87 Μάμμεδ T Μάμεθ U προσέθηκεν T τέθηκεν S 88 προφανῶς om. S νομοθετήσας S νομοθήσας U δύναται PRS δύνανται T 89 ὅσα, sed suppl. ς T κατάσχει QRT -σχεῖν P 90 Ἣν1] ἢ T ᾗ P ἤδαν Q ἣν^2] ἡ(!) R ἣν ἐθελήσειε om. U θελήσειε P ἄλλην add. ἣν ἐθέλοι U

They also slander us as idolaters for venerating the cross, which they despise. And we say to them: "How, therefore, is it that you rub yourselves against a stone at your Ka'ba, and you worship the stone by kissing it?" And some of them respond that upon it Abraham had intercourse with Hagar, but others say, because on it he tied the camel when he was about to sacrifice Isaac. And we respond to them: "The Scripture says that there was a mountain with bushes and woods, from which Abraham cut for the burnt offering on which he laid Isaac, and that he left the asses behind with the servants. From where, therefore, is this nonsense? For, in that place, there is neither wood from a forest, nor can asses travel through". And they are embarrassed, but nevertheless they say the stone is of Abraham. Then we say: "Let us suppose it is of Abraham, as you foolishly claim; so kissing it just because Abraham had intercourse with a woman on it, or because he tied his camel to it, you are not ashamed, but you chastise us because we venerate the cross of Christ, through which the power of the demons and the deceit of the devil have been destroyed." This, then, which they call "stone", is the head of Aphrodite, whom they used to venerate and whom they called Khaber, upon which, even now, one who looks carefully can see on it traces of a carving.

This Muhammad, as has been said, set down many foolish sayings, and put a title on each one, such as the writing of 'Woman', in which he clearly legislates that one may have four wives and a thousand concubines, if he is able, as many as he can maintain beside the four wives. But he can divorce whomsoever he pleases, if he so wishes,

ἐκ τοιαύτης αἰτίας νομοθετήσας. Σύμπονον ἔσχεν ὁ Μάμεδ Ζεῒδ προσαγορευόμενον. Οὗτος γυναῖκα ὡραίαν ἔσχεν, ἧς ἠράσθη ὁ Μάμεδ. Καθημένων οὖν αὐτῶν φησιν ὁ Μάμεδ· Ὁ δεῖνα, ὁ θεὸς ἐνετείλατό μοι τὴν γυναῖκά σου λαβεῖν. Ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη· Ἀπόστολος εἶ· ποίησον, ὥς σοι ὁ θεὸς εἶπε· λάβε τὴν γυναῖκά μου. Μᾶλλον δέ, ἵνα ἄνωθεν εἴπωμεν, ἔφη πρὸς αὐτόν· Ὁ θεὸς ἐνετείλατό μοι, ἵνα ἀπολύσῃς τὴν γυναῖκά σου. Ὁ δὲ ἀπέλυσε. Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας ἄλλας φησίν· Ἵνα κἀγὼ αὐτὴν λάβω, ἐνετείλατο ὁ θεός. Εἶτα λαβὼν καὶ μοιχεύσας αὐτὴν τοιοῦτον ἔθηκε νόμον· Ὁ βουλόμενος ἀπολυέτω τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ. Ἐὰν δὲ μετὰ τὸ ἀπολῦσαι ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἀναστρέψῃ, γαμείτω αὐτὴν ἄλλος. Οὐ γὰρ ἔξεστι λαβεῖν αὐτήν, εἰ μὴ γαμηθῇ ὑφ' ἑτέρου. Ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀπολύσῃ, γαμείτω αὐτὴν ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ βουλόμενος. Ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ γραφῇ τοιαῦτα παραγγέλλει· Ἔργασαι τὴν γῆν, ἣν ἔδωκέ σοι ὁ θεός, καὶ φιλοκάλησον αὐτήν, καὶ τόδε ποίησον καὶ τοιῶσδε, ἵνα μὴ πάντα λέγω ὡς ἐκεῖνος αἰσχρά.

Πάλιν γραφὴ τῆς καμήλου τοῦ θεοῦ, περὶ ἧς λέγει, ὅτι ἦν κάμηλος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἔπινεν ὅλον τὸν ποταμὸν καὶ οὐ διήρχετο μεταξὺ δύο ὀρέων διὰ τὸ μὴ χωρεῖσθαι. Λαὸς οὖν, φησίν, ἦν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, καὶ τὴν μὲν μίαν ἡμέραν αὐτὸς ἔπινε τὸ ὕδωρ, ἡ δὲ κάμηλος τῇ ἑξῆς. Πίνουσα δὲ τὸ ὕδωρ ἔτρεφεν αὐτοὺς τὸ γάλα παρεχομένη ἀντὶ τοῦ ὕδατος. Ἀνέστησαν οὖν οἱ ἄνδρες ἐκεῖνοι, φησί, πονηροὶ ὄντες καὶ ἀπέκτειναν τὴν κάμηλον· τῆς δὲ γέννημα ὑπῆρχεν μικρὰ κάμηλος, ἥτις, φησί, τῆς μητρὸς ἀναιρεθείσης ἀνεβόησε πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ ἔλαβεν αὐτὴν πρὸς ἑαυτόν. Πρὸς οὕς φαμεν· Πόθεν ἡ κάμηλος ἐκείνη· Καὶ λέγουσιν, ὅτι ἐκ θεοῦ. Καί φαμεν· Συνεβιβάσθη ταύτῃ κάμηλος ἄλλη; Καὶ λέγουσιν· Οὐχί. Πόθεν οὖν, φαμέν, ἐγέννησεν; Ὁρῶμεν γὰρ τὴν κάμηλον ὑμῶν ἀπάτορα καὶ ἀμήτορα καὶ ἀγενεαλόγητον, γεννήσασα δὲ κακὸν ἔπαθεν. Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁ βιβάσας φαίνεται, καὶ ἡ μικρὰ κάμηλος ἀνελήφθη. Ὁ οὖν προφήτης ὑμῶν, ᾧ, καθὼς λέγετε, ἐλάλησεν ὁ θεός, διὰ τί περὶ τῆς καμήλου οὐκ ἔμαθε, ποῦ βόσκεται καὶ τίνες γαλεύονται

91 Ζεῒδ P. Khoury 55 108–111 Coran. 2, 230 (230) 97 ἀπολυέτω 100, 99 112 Coran. 2, 223

PQRSTU

91 ἔσχεν add. οὗτος U Μάμμεδ T Μάμεθ U Ζεῒδ RST Ζεῒθ U Μάμμεδ T Μάμεθ U Μάμεδ corr. in Μοάμεδ S[c] Μάμεδ ut in 101, sed Μμάμεδ T 93 ὥς] ὃ ST 94 εἶπε] ἐνετείλατο U add. καὶ S 95 ἄλλας] ἀλλάς PQU κἀγὼ ante φησιν P 97 ἐπ' pr. αὐτὴν S om. PT αὐτὴν[1]] αὐτὸν U add. πάλιν S ἀναστρέψει Q 98 ὑφ'] ὑπὸ SU γαμείτω αὐτὴν s. s. τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ S[e] αὐτὴν add. ὁ SU 99 ὁ om, PRU γραφῇ add. αὐτοῦ R 100 ἔργασα S σοι ὁ θεὸς ἔδωκε coll. P 104 γραφὴ] γράφει T ἐγράφει γραφῇ S pr. ἡ PQU ἔπιεν ST 106 ἔπιε ST 107 τὸ om. S τοῦ om. S 108 φησί—ὄντες om. S φησί post ὄντες R om. Q τῆς[1]] τῇ S δὲ add. καμήλου P 109 ἐβόησε ST ἑαυτόν] τὸν θεόν, sed corr. S 110 Πόθεν add. οὖν P φαμεν[2]] λέγουεν ὅτι S 111 τὴν—ὑμῶν] αὐτὴν S καὶ om. ST 113 καὶ om. S βιβάσας] βιασάυενος STU 113 ᾧ om. PQ 113 λέγεται QT

and take another one having created such a law. Muhammad had worked together with Zaid, to whom he had been introduced. This man had a beautiful wife whom Muhammad loved. Sitting together, Muhammad said to him: “God commanded me to take your wife”. And he replied, “you are an apostle; do as God has told you; take my wife”. Or rather, so that we may tell the story from the beginning, he said to him: “God commanded that you should divorce your wife”. So he divorced her. After another day he said, “God commanded I should take her”. Then after having taken her and committing adultery with her he made this law: “Whosoever wants may divorce his wife. But after the divorce, if he wants to return to her let her marry another (first). For he is not permitted to receive her, if she has not married another. And even if a brother divorces, let his brother marry her if he so wishes”. In the same Scripture, he sets out this kind of pronouncement: “Work the land which God gave you and beautify it; and do this and in this way” … so that I may not say all of his obscenities.

Again, there is the writing of “The Camel of God”, about which he says that there was a camel from God and that she used to drink the whole river and could not pass between two mountains because there was not enough room for her. There were people in that place, he says, and on one day they were drinking the water and the camel on the next. (Having drunk the water, she supplied them offering milk instead of the water.) Those men rose up, he says, and being evil they killed the camel. But there was, however, a small camel born of her which, he says, cried to God when its mother died, and He took her up to Himself. And we say to them: “Where was that camel from?” And they respond, “from God”. And we say, “Was there another camel that coupled with her?” And they say, “No”. “How then” we say, “did she give birth? For we see that your camel was fatherless, motherless and without genealogy, but having given birth she

ταύτην ἀμέλγοντες; Ἢ καὶ αὐτὴ μή ποτε κακοῖς ὡς ἡ μήτηρ περιτυχοῦσα ἀνῃρέθη ἢ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ πρόδρομος ὑμῶν εἰσῆλθεν, ἀφ’ ἧς ὁ ποταμὸς ὑμῖν ἔσται, ὃν ληρεῖτε, τοῦ γάλακτος; Τρεῖς γάρ φατε ποταμοὺς ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ῥέειν· ὕδατος, οἴνου καὶ γάλακτος. Ἐὰν ἐκτός ἐστιν ἡ πρόδρομος ὑμῶν κάμηλος τοῦ παραδείσου, δῆλον, ὅτι ἀπεξηράνθη πείνῃ καὶ δίψῃ ἢ ἄλλοι τοῦ γάλακτος αὐτῆς ἀπολαύουσι, καὶ μάτην ὁ προφήτης ὑμῶν φρυάττεται ὡς ὁμιλήσας θεῷ· οὐ γὰρ τὸ μυστήριον αὐτῷ ἀπεκαλύφθη τῆς καμήλου. Εἰ δὲ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ἐστί, πάλιν πίνει τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ ἀνυδρίᾳ ξηραίνεσθε ἐν μέσῳ τῆς τρυφῆς τοῦ παραδείσου. Κἂν οἶνον ἐκ τοῦ παροδεύοντος ἐπιθυμήσητε ποταμοῦ, μὴ παρόντος ὕδατος—ἀπέπιε γὰρ ὅλον ἡ κάμηλος—ἄκρατον πίνοντες ἐκκαίεσθε καὶ μέθῃ παραπαίετε καὶ καθεύδετε· καρηβαροῦντες δὲ καὶ μεθ’ ὕπνον καὶ κεκραιπαληκότες ἐξ οἴνου τῶν ἡδέων ἐπιλανθάνεσθε τοῦ παραδείσου. Πῶς οὖν ὁ προφήτης ὑμῶν οὐκ ἐνενοήθη ταῦτα, μήποτε συμβῇ ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τῆς τρυφῆς, οὐδὲ περὶ τῆς καμήλου πεφρόντικεν, ὅπου νῦν διάγει; Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἠρωτήσατε αὐτόν, ὡς ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν τριῶν διηγόρευσεν ὀνειροπολούμενος ποταμῶν. Ἀλλ’ ἡμεῖς σαφῶς τὴν θαυμαστὴν ὑμῶν κάμηλον εἰς ψυχὰς ὄνων, ὅπου καὶ ὑμεῖς μέλλετε διάγειν ὡς κτηνώδεις, προδραμοῦσαν ὑμῶν ἐπαγγελλόμεθα. Ἐκεῖσε δὲ σκότος ἐστὶ τὸ ἐξώτερον καὶ κόλασις ἀτελεύτητος, πῦρ ἠχοῦν, σκώληξ ἀκοίμητος καὶ ταρτάριοι δαίμονες.

---

114. 117 Coran. 17, 59 (61); 26, 154s (154s); 54, 27; P. Khoury 56; Sahas 91s 119 φρυάττ. 100, 33 136–148 P. Khoury 59; Sahas 92 128 εἰς ψυχὰς 7, 61 147 Mt 8, 12 Mc 9, 48

PQRSTU

---

115 ἀλμέγοντες S Ἢ] εἰ PQ αὕτη R κακοῖς post μήτηρ S περιτυχοῦσα ante ὡς R ἢ] εἰ καὶ S 116 τοῦ om. R 117 Ἐὰν add. οὖν S ἡ — κάμηλος om. U τοῦ παραδείσου ante ἡ πρόδρομος S 118 δηλονότι ἐξηράνθη τῇ πίνῃ καὶ τῇ δίψῃ S 119 αὐτῆς om. P 121 ξηραίνεσθαι ST 121 τῆς τρυφῆς/τοῦ παραδείσου trp. S Κἂν] καὶ ST 122 κατέπιε U 123 ἄκρατον pr. καὶ S καριβαριοῦντες S μεθ’] καθ’ P 124 ὕπνου S κρεκραιπαληκῶς Q κεκραπ- S ἐπιλανθάνετε P 125 μήποτε] μή PQ 126 ποῦ S περὶ] διά U ὑμεῖς S ὑμῶν] ὑμῖν U 129 δὲ] δὴ S

suffered evil. In your story there appears neither the one who coupled with the she-camel, nor (how) the young camel was taken up. Why did your prophet therefore, to whom, according to what you say, God has spoken, not find out about the camel, where she grazes, who milks her, and who drinks her milk? Or did she also, at some time, like her mother, fall into the hands of evil men and was killed, or did she enter into paradise before you, she from whom the river of milk flows that you so foolishly speak about? For you say that three rivers will flow for you in paradise; of water, wine and milk. If your forerunner camel is outside of paradise, it is clear that she has died out of hunger and thirst, or that others are enjoying her milk, and your prophet is boasting in vain as though he talked with God; for the mystery of the camel was not revealed to him. But if she is in paradise, she is again drinking the water and, without water, you will be parched in the midst of the delights of paradise. And if you will desire wine from the nearby flowing river, when there is no water present—for the camel drank it all—drinking of it unmixed you will burn, and you will stumble from drunkenness, and fall asleep; and heavy headed, both after sleep, and being drunk from the wine, you will miss the pleasures of paradise. How, then, did your prophet not think of these things—neither that they might happen to you in the paradise of delight nor where the camel is now? But neither did you ask him yourself about the three rivers he spoke about from his dreams. But we assure you that your wonderful camel has already entered into the souls of asses, leading the way where you also are going to go, like animals. And there is the outer darkness and everlasting hell; a roaring fire, an ever wakeful worm, and demons of hell”.

Πάλιν φησὶν ὁ Μάμεδ· ἡ γραφὴ «τῆς τραπέζης» λέγει δέ, ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς ᾐτήσατο παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τράπεζαν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ. Ὁ γὰρ θεός, φησίν, εἶπεν αὐτῷ, ὅτι δέδωκά σοι καὶ τοῖς σοῖς τράπεζαν ἄφθαρτον.

Πάλιν γραφὴν «βοιδίου» λέγει καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ῥήματα γέλωτος ἄξια, ἃ διὰ τὸ πλῆθος παραδραμεῖν οἴομαι δεῖν. Τούτους περιτέμνεσθαι σὺν γυναιξὶ νομοθετήσας καὶ μήτε σαββατίζειν μήτε βαπτίζεσθαι προστάξας, τὰ μὲν τῶν ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ἀπηγορευμένων ἐσθίειν, τῶν δὲ ἀπέχεσθαι παραδούς· οἰνοποσίαν δὲ παντελῶς ἀπηγόρευσεν.

149–156 repet. Nicetas Chon., Thes. 20, 9: MPG 140, 113 C 8—D 4 149–151 Coran. 5, 114 (114) s 152 Coran. 2; Khoury 65; P. Khoury 56 153s P. Khoury 61

PQRSTU

---

137 Μάμεδ ut ad 92 ὁ[2] om. P 139 ἄφθαρτον expl. PQ sequ. Expos. P sequ. Sarac. Q 140 ληρήματα R 141 δεῖν add. καὶ νομοθετήσας (om. in 141) S 142 μήτε[1]] τέκνοις S προστάξας—νόμῳ om., sed suppl. νόμῳ T προστάξας add. καὶ S μὲν τῶν ἐν]μέντοι U ἐν om. S ἀπηγορευμένα U τῶν[2]] τὰ S 143 δὲ om. SU ἀπηγόρευσεν explic. Haer. sequ. Anast. Antioch. R sequ. (cum lin. decor. interiecta T) Οὗτοι μὲν οὖν ἕως = Byzantion 10 (1935) 93 lin. 5 et MPG 94, 761, 15—764, 5 et alia de haeres. ST sequ. ut cc. 102 et 103 de Christianocategoris et Aposchistis = MPG 94, 773, 6–777, 16 (de c. 102 cf. Gero, Leo III 68) U

Muhammad, again, spoke of the Scripture of "The Table", for he says that Christ requested a table from God, and it was given to him. For God, he says, told him, "I have given to you and to your (companions) an incorruptible table".

Also the Scripture of The Heifer, and several other foolish tales worthy of laughter which, because of their number, I think it necessary to pass over. Having made a law that they and the women be circumcised, he also commanded (them) neither to observe the Sabbath, nor to be baptized, and to eat things forbidden by the Law but, on the other hand, to abstain from other things which the law permits. He also forbade the drinking of wine completely.

APPENDIX 2

Potential Qur'anic References in 'On Heresies 100'

John of Damascus (Reference in Kotter's Critical Edition, pp. 60–67)	Qur'an Reference (Jones Version)
Muhammed spread rumors that a Scripture was brought down to him from Heaven by God (ln. 14–16).	Gabriel is mentioned as an intermediary in the Suras John quotes that we have today. Sura 2:97.
Muhammed says there is one God, maker of all, neither begotten nor has he begotten (ln. 17).	112:2
He says Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit, created and a servant (ln. 18–19).	That Christ is the word of God and a Spirit from Him appears several times in the Qur'an. See 3:39, 3:45, 4:171. That he is created is found at 3:59, that he is a servant is found at 4:172, 19:30, 19:93, and 43:59.
He says Christ was born without seed from Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron (ln. 19–20).	2:87, 2:253
He says the Word of God and Spirit entered Mary and she gave birth to Jesus who was a prophet and servant of God (ln. 20–21).	4:171, 19:17, 21:91, 66:12
Jews, having violated the Law, wanted to crucify him, arrested him, but crucified his likeness (ln. 22–23).	4:157, 3:54, 2:73
But Christ himself, was not crucified, they say, nor did he die (ln. 23–24).	4:157
Christ was taken up to God in heaven because he loved him (ln. 24–25).	Christ was taken up to heaven by God in Sura 4:158, but "because God loved him" is not found.

 | DOI 10.1163/9789004356054_010

John of Damascus (Reference in Kotter's Critical Edition, pp. 60–67)	Qur'an Reference (Jones Version)
God asked him, 'Did you say "I am God and Son of God?"' Jesus, they say, answered, 'Be merciful to me nor will I boast that I am your servant; but men who have gone astray wrote that I said this and they said lies concerning me and they have been in error. And God, they say, responded to him: 'I know that you did not say this.' (ln. 27–31).	5:116, 3:55, 5:17, 5:72, 4:171, 9:30, 19:35, 19:90, 39:4, 112:3.
He insists that this was brought down to him from God (ln. 32–33).	The phrase 'brought down' is used repeatedly in the Qur'an. Suras 2:4, 2:23, 2:41, 2:90, 2:97, 2:99, 2:159, 2:170, 2:174, 2:176, 2:185, 2:213, 2:231, 2:285, 3:23, 4:105, 5:48, 10:94, 16:64, 27:6, 76:23.
Muslims reported to say that, 'while he was asleep the Scripture came down upon him.' (ln. 47–48).	The tradition that Muhammad was asleep while the revelation came upon him is not found in the Qur'an, although it does appear in the Islamic Tradition.
John recounts that in their Scripture Muhammad demanded that they neither receive anything nor do anything without witnesses (ln. 51–54).	2:282, 4:6, 4:15, 4:41, 5:106, 24:4, and 65:2 all call for witnesses for different occasions respectively.
since you are not permitted to marry a woman without witnesses, nor to buy something, nor to acquire property, nor even allow yourselves to have an ass or an animal without witnesses (ln. 55–59).	2:282 has a partial list of transactions that should be witnessed.
They call us Associators, because, they say, we introduce beside God an associate to Him when saying that Christ is the Son of God and God (ln. 61–62).	4:48, 4:116, 5:72, 28:68, 30:35 all speak of Associators.

cont.

John of Damascus (Reference in Kotter's Critical Edition, pp. 60–67)	**Qur'an Reference (Jones Version)**
You as you confidently affirm, accept the prophets (ln. 63–64).	Acceptance of the Old Testament prophets is taken for granted in the Qur'an. See 4:69 for their status as a virtuous group. See 4:64 for the injunction to obedience and 2:136 for a partial list of prophets.
And some of them say that we have added such things, having allegorized the prophets, but others say that the Jews, hating us, deceived us by writing things as though from the prophets so that we might get lost (ln. 65–69).	Although it is debated what is meant by 'distortion' and who is responsible for it, the idea that the Scriptures were distorted is found in the Qur'an. See 2:59, 2:79, and 3:78 for examples.[a]
They also slander us as idolaters for venerating the cross, which they despise (ln. 78–79).	Veneration of the cross specifically does not appear as an issue in the Qur'an.
You rub yourselves against a stone at your Ka'ba, and you worship the stone by kissing it (ln. 79–80).	Tradition not found in the Qur'an.
Some of them respond that because Abraham had intercourse with Hagar on it (ln. 81).	Tradition not found in the Qur'an.
Others say, because on it he tied the camel when he was about to sacrifice Isaac (ln. 82).	Tradition not found in the Qur'an.
Writing of 'Woman', in which he clearly legislates that one may have four wives and one thousand concubines if he is able, as many as he can maintain beside the four wives. But he can divorce whomsoever he pleases, if he so wishes, and take another one, having created such a law (ln. 96–100).	See 4:3 for marriage and the number of wives. Divorce is addressed at several points. See 2:226–232 and 65:1–2 for reference to the conditions.

John of Damascus (Reference in Kotter's Critical Edition, pp. 60–67)	Qur'an Reference (Jones Version)
Muhammad had worked together with Zaid, to whom he had been introduced. This man had a beautiful wife who Muhammad loved. Therefore sitting together Muhammad said to him: 'Oh you, God commanded me to take your wife'. And he replied, 'you are an apostle; do as God has told you; take my wife'. Or rather, so that we may tell the story from the beginning, he said to him: 'God commanded me (to tell you) that you should divorce your wife'. So he divorced her. (After another day) he said, 'God commanded me that I should take her'. Then after having taken her and committing adultery with her he made this law: 'Whosoever wants may divorce his wife. But after the divorce, if he wants to return to her let someone else marry her (first). For it is not permitted to take her (back) if she did marry someone else. And even if a brother divorces, let his brother marry her if he so wishes'. In the same writing, he sets out this kind of pronouncement: 'Work the land which God gave you and beautify it; and do this and in this way' … so that I may not say all of his obscenities (ln. 100–113).	This story found in the Qur'an only by allusion at 33:37. The passage regarding tilling can be found at 2:223.
The Writing of the Camel of God (ln. 114).	The story is found in 21 different suras. See above for discussion. The most extensive versions are found at 7:73–79, 8:61–68, 10:23–32, 11:64–68, 18:141–158, and 26:155–159.

cont.

John of Damascus (Reference in Kotter's Critical Edition, pp. 60–67)	Qur'an Reference (Jones Version)
For you say that three rivers will flow for you in paradise; of water, wine and milk (ln. 131–32)	A version of this is found in Sura 2:25. Also see verse 47:15, which contains all four rivers.
Writing of the Table in which Christ requested a table from God, and it was given to him. For God, he says, told him, 'I have given to you and to your companions an incorruptible table' (ln. 149–51).	5:114 contains a story in which God sends down to Jesus a table. There is no quotations comparable to that which John offers, nor is there mention of the table being 'incorruptible'.
Writing of the Cow (ln. 152).	Sura 2 (*al-baqara*).
Made a law that women should be circumcised (ln. 153–54).	Circumcision is not found in the Qur'an.
Made a law that not to observe the Sabbath (ln. 154).	There is no such law in the Qur'an. However, men of the Sabbath are cursed at 4:47.
Made a law that they not be baptized (ln. 154)	There is only one possible reference to baptism in the Qur'an, at 2:138. This does not appear in Jones' translation, and it is unclear what the Arabic term *sibgha* means. In any case, there is no apparent prohibition against baptism in the Qur'an.[b]
Made law to eat things forbidden by Law, forbade others permitted by the Law, and forbade wine completely (ln. 155–56).	2:172, 5:1, 5:96, 6:119, 6:138–145, 6:146, 16:114, and 22:34 deal with permitting certain foods and prohibiting others. Prohibition of wine is found at 2:219, 4:43, 5:90.

a For discussion, see S. Abdullah, 'The Charge of Distortion of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures', *MW* 92.3–4 (2002), pp. 419–36.

b See H. Goddard, 'Baptism', in McAuliffe (ed.), *EQ* vol. 1, p. 200.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Adler, William and Tuffin, Paul (trans.), *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation*, (Oxford University Press, 2002).

Allen, Pauline (ed. and trans.), *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-century Heresy: The Synodical Letter and other Documents: Introduction, Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Bewley, Aisha Abdurrahman (ed.), *Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The First Formulation of Islamic Law* (Kegan Paul International, 1989).

Bowen, Anthony and Garnsey, Peter (eds. and trans.), *Lactantius: Divine Institutes* (Liverpool University Press, 2003).

Brinner, William M. (ed.), *'Arā'is al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā or "Lives of the Prophets" as recounted by Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Tha'labī* in Studies in Arabic Literature, vol. 24 (Brill, 2002).

Brock, Sebastian P., 'An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 91 (1973), pp. 299–346.

Budge, E. A. W. (ed.), *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj, the son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus; Being the First Part of his Political History of the World* 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1932).

Bulst, Neithard and France, John (eds. and trans.), *Rodulphi Glabri Historiarum libri quinque = Rodolfus Glaber: The Five Books of the Histories* (Clarendon Press, 1989).

Busse, A. (ed.), *Eliae in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias Commentaria* (Reimer, 1900).

Chabot, Jean Baptiste (ed.), *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)* 5 vols. (Ernest Leroux, 1899).

Chabot, Jean Baptiste (ed.), *Anonymi Auctoris Chronicon ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1916–20).

Chase, Frederic H. (trans.), *St. John of Damascus: Writings*, Fathers of the Church, vol. 58 (Catholic University of America Press, 1958).

de Boor, Carl (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* 2 vols. (Georg Olms, 1963).

Deferrari, Roy J. and McGuire, Martin R. P. (eds. and trans.), *Saint Basil: The Letters* 4 vols. (Harvard University Press, 1950).

Diekamp, Franz, *Analecta Patristica; texte und abhandlungen zur griechischen patristik* (Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1938).

Diekamp, Franz (ed.), *Doctina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi* (Aschendorff, 1981).

Eno, R. B. (trans.), *St. Augustine: Letters*, (Catholic University of America Press, 1951).

Evetts, B. T. A. (ed.), *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* (P. Fages, 1910).

Förstel, Karl (ed. and trans.), *Niketas von Byzanz. Schriften zum Islam* (Echter, 2000).

Gallay, Paul (ed.), *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Lettres* 2 vols. (Les Belles lettres, 1964).

Gaudeul, Jean-Marie (trans.), 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar: 'Umar's Letter Rediscovered?' *Islamochristiana*, (1984), pp. 109–57.

Gibson, Margaret (ed. and trans.), *An Arabic Version of The Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles with a treatise On the Triune Nature of God* (C. J. Clay and Sons, 1899).

Glei, Reinhold and Khoury, Abel.-Theodore (eds.), *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurra. Schriften zum Islam* (Echter, 1995).

Gottheil, Robert, 'A Christian Bahira Legend', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 14 (1900), pp. 203–69.

Gottheil, Robert, 'A Christian Bahira Legend', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XVII (1903).

Grant, Robert M. and Menzies, Glen W. (eds. and trans.), *Joseph's Bible notes = Hypomnestikon* (Scholars Press, 1996).

Gregg, Robert C. (trans.), *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus* (SPCK, 1980).

Green, R. P. H. (ed. and trans.), *De doctrina Christiana by Augustine of Hippo* (Clarendon Press, 1995).

Griffith, Sidney. H., 'Some Unpublished Arabic Sayings attributed to Theodore Abu Qurrah', *Le Muséon*, 92 (1979), pp. 27–35.

Griffith, Sidney. H. (ed.), *A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons by Theodore Abu Qurrah* (Peeters, 1997).

Guillaume, Alfred (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*, (2nd edn., Oxford University Press, 1968).

Hamilton, Janet and Hamilton, Bernard (trans.) *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine world c. 650–c. 1450* (Manchester University Press, 1998).

Hansen, Günther Christian and Parmentier, Léon (eds.), *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte* (3rd edn., Akademie Verlag, 1998).

Hasan, Ahmad (ed.), *Sunan Abu Dawud* (Al-Madina Publications, 1985).

Hill, Robert C. (trans.), *Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul* 2 vols. (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001).

Hespel, Robert and Draguet, René (ed. and trans.), *Théodore Bar Koni: Livre des Scholies* (*recension de Séert*), (Peeters, 1982).

Holl, Karl (ed.), *Die Sacra Parallela des Johannes Damaskenos* (J. C. Hinrichs, 1896).

Holl, Karl (ed.), *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion* (Akademie-Verlag, 1915).

Holl, Karl (ed.), *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34–64* (2nd edn., Akademie-Verlag, 1980).

Holl, Karl (ed.), *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65–80* (2nd edn., Akademie-Verlag, 1985).

Hoyland, Robert G., *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Darwin Press, 1997).

Huart, Clément (ed.), *Le Livre de la Création et de l'Histoire* 6 vols. (Leroux, 1899–1916).

Jeffrey, Arthur, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence Between 'Umar II and Leo III', *Harvard Theological Review*, 37 (1944), pp. 269–332.

Jones, Allen (trans.), *The Qur'ān*, (Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007).

Keating, Sandra T. (ed.), *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Early Islamic Period: The Christian Apologies of Abu Raitah* (Brill, 2006).

Khalidi, Tarik (ed.), *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Harvard University Press, 2001).

Khan, Muhammad M. (ed.), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahīh al-Bukhārī* (Dar al-'Arabiyah, 1985).

Kotter, Bonifatius, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 5 vols. (Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29, 1969–88).

Labriolle, Pierre Champagne de, and Refoulé, R. F. (eds. and trans.), *Tertullian. De la prescription contre les hérétiques* (Éditions du Cerf, 1957).

Lake, Kirsopp (ed. and trans.), *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History* (Harvard University Press, 1949).

Lamoreaux, John C. (ed.), *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas* 2 vols. (Peeters, 1999).

Lamoreaux, John C. (trans.), *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, (Brigham Young University Press, 2005).

Langerbeck, Hermann (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni In Canticum Canticorum* (Brill, 1960).

Lawson, R. P. (trans.), *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, (Newman Press, 1957).

Le Boulluec, Allain (ed. and trans.), *Les stromates VII* (Editions du Cerf, 1997).

Le Coz, Raymond (ed. and trans.), *Ecrits Sur Islam: Presentation with Introduction, Translation, and Commentaries* (Les Editions Du Cerf, 1992).

Leib, Bernard (ed.), *Alexiade* (*règne de l'empereur Alexis I Comnène, 1081–1118*) 4 vols. (2nd edn., Société d'Édition les Belles Lettres, 1967).

Lightfoot, J. B. and Harmer, J. R. (eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers* (2nd edn., Baker Book House Company, 1992).

Louth, Andrew (trans.), *Three Treatises On the Divine Images*, (SVS Press, 2003).

Madelung, Wilferd and Walker, Paul E. (ed. and trans.), *An Ismaili Heresiography: The "Bāb al-shayṭān" from Abū Tammām's Kitāb al-shajara* (Brill, 1998).

Mango, Cyril and Scott, Roger (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, (Clarendon Press, 1997).

Mango, Cyril (ed.), *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History, Text, Translation and Commentary* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1990).

Mansi, J. D. (ed.), *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* 31 vols. (1759–98).

Marcovich, Miroslav (ed.), *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* (De Gruyter, 1986).

Marcuzzo, Giacinto B. (ed.), *Le dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade avec Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hāšimī à Jérusalem vers 820: étude, édition critique et traduction annotée d'un texte théologique chrétien de la littérature arabe* (Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 1986).

Metzger, Marcel (ed. and trans.), *Les Constitutions Apostoliques* 3 vols. (Editions du Cerf, 1985).

Migne, Jean-Paul (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca* 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–66).

Mingana, Alphonse (ed.), *An Ancient Syriac Translation of the Kuran Exhibiting New Verses and Variants* (University Press, 1925).

Mingana, Alphonse and Harris, R., 'The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 12.1 (1928), pp. 137–298.

Muir, William (ed.), *The Apology of Al Kindy* (2nd edn., 1887).

Palmer, Andrew (ed.), *The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool University Press, 1993).

Peeters, Paul, 'S. Pierre de Capitolas', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 57 (1939), pp. 299–333.

Pharr, Clyde (trans.), *The Theodosian Code* (Princeton University Press, 1952).

Pitra, Jean Baptiste (ed.), *Juris Ecclesiastici Graecorum Historia et Monumenta* (Bardi Editore, 1864).

Ramsey, Bonifatius (trans.), Cassian, John, *The Conferences*, (Paulist Press, 1997).

Reinink, G. J. (ed. and trans.), *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* 2 vols. (Peeters, 1993).

Richard, Marcel and Munitiz, Joseph A. (eds.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Quaestiones et responsiones* (Brepols, 2006).

Roberts, Alexander, et al. (trans.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. VII* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).

Rousseau, Adelin and Doutreleau, Louis (eds. and trans.), *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les Hérésies: Livre I* (Editions du Cerf, 1965).

Rousseau, Adelin and Doutreleau, Louis (eds.), *Contre les Hérésies: Livre II* (Editions du Cerf, 1982).

Sahas, Daniel J. (trans.), *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm*, (University of Toronto Press, 1986).

Schwartz, Eduard. and Mommsen, Theodor (eds.), *Eusebius Werke* (Hinrichs, 1903).

Teske, Roland J. (trans.), *Arianism and Other Heresies by Augustine of Hippo* (New City Press, 1995).

Thackston, W. M. (ed.), *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisa'i* (Twayne Publishers, 1978).

Thomson, Robert and Howard-Johnston, James (eds.), *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos* (Liverpool University Press, 1999).

Uthemann, Karl-Heinz (ed.), *Anastasii Sinaitae Viae dux* (Brepols, 1981).

Vasiliev, 'Kitab al-'Unvan, histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj', *Patrologia Orientalis*, 8.2.2 (1912).

Vermes, Mark, Lieu, Samuel, and Kaatz, Kevin (ed. and trans.) *Hegemonius. Acta Archelai:* (*The Acts of Archelaus*) (Brepols, 2001).

Whiston, William (trans.), *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, (New updated edn., Hendrickson Publishers, 1987).

Whitby, Michael (trans.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (Liverpool University Press, 2000).

Williams, Frank (trans.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis Book I* (*Sects 1–46*), (Brill, 1987).

Williams, Frank (trans.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of SalamiS Books II and III* (*Sects 47–80*), (Brill, 1994).

Williams, Frank (trans.), *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* (2nd edn., Brill, 2009).

Wilson, Nigel Guy (ed. and trans.), *Saint Basil on the Value of Greek Literature* (Duckworth, 1975).

Wüstenfeld, Heinrich F. (ed.), *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka von Abul-Wlid Muhammed bin Abdallah el-Azraki* (Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1857–61).

Yonge, Charles D. (ed.), *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (New edn., Hendrickson, 1993).

Zenos, A. C., Hartranft, C. D., and Schaff, P. (trans.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus. Followed by The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen, comprising a history of the Church, from A.D. 323 to A.D. 425.*, (T & T Clark, 1891).

Secondary Sources

Abu-Sahlieh, S. A. A., 'Muslims' Genitalia in the Hands of the Clergy: Religious Arguments about Male and Female Circumcision', in Denniston, G. C., Hodges, F. M., and Milos, M. F. (eds.), *Male and Female Circumcision: Medical, Legal, and Ethical Considerations in Pediatric Practice* (Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 1999), pp. 131–72.

Album, Stephen and Goodwin, Tony, *The Pre-reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period* (Ashmolean Museum, 2002).

Alexander, Paul, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (University of California Press, 1985).

Allatius, Leo, *De Sancto Joanne Damasceno Prolegomena et Dissertationenes* (PG 94, 1860).

Arndt, William, Danker, F. W., and Bauer, Walter, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (3rd edn.; University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Arzoumanian, Zaven (ed.), *History of Lewond, the Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians = Patmut'iwn ¡ewondeay meci vardapeti Hayoc'* (St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church, 1982).

Ashe, Geoffrey, *The Virgin: Mary's Cult and the Re-emergence of the Goddess* (Arkana, 1988).

Auzépy, Marie-France, 'La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé, par Léon III: propagande ou réalité?' *Byzantion*, 60 (1990), pp. 445–92.

Auzépy, Marie-France, 'De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIIIe–IXe Siècles): Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène', *Travaux et Memoires*, 12 (1994), pp. 183–218.

Axon, H. J., 'The Black Stone of the Ka'ba: Suggestions as to Its Constitution', *Journal of Materials Science Letters*, 1.1 (1982), pp. 10–12.

Balz, Holst and Schneider, Gerhard, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Eerdmans, 1990).

Barnard, Laurette, 'The Criminalisation of Heresy in the later Roman Empire: A Sociopolitical Device?' *The Journal of Legal History*, 16.2 (1995), pp. 121–46.

Barnard, Leslie W., *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (Brill, 1974).

Bates, Michael L., 'Byzantine Coinage and Its Imitations, Arab Coinage and Its Imitations: Arab-Byzantine Coinage', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 381–403.

Bauer, Walter, Kraft, Robert. A., and Krodel, Gerhard, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (SCM Press, 1972).

Baumstark, Anton, *Syrisch-arabische Biographieen des Aristoteles. Syrisch Commentare zur Eisagoge des Porphyrios* (Teubner, 1900).

Baumstark, Anton, *Geschichte der Syrischen Literatur* (Marcus and Weber, 1922).

Bearman, P., et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New edn., Brill, 1960–2005).

BeDuhn, Jason and Mirecki, Paul Allan (eds.), *Frontiers of Faith: The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus* (Brill, 2007).

Benko, Stephen, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian roots of Mariology* (Brill, 1993).

Berlinerblau, Jacques, 'Toward a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy, and Doxa', *History of Religions*, 40.4 (2001), pp. 327–51.

Bertaina, David, 'An Arabic Account of Theodore Abu Qurra in Debate at the Court of Caliph al-Ma'mun: A Study in Early Christian and Muslim Literary Dialogues', unpublished Ph.D. (Catholic University of America, 2007).

de Blois, Francois, 'Nasrānī (ναζωραιος) and hanīf (εθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam', *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, 65.1 (2002), pp. 1–30.

de Blois, Francois, 'Review of Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 5.1 (2003), pp. 92–97.

Bowersock, G. W., Brown, Peter, and Grabar, Oleg, *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999).

Boyarin, Daniel, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Brock, Sebastian P., 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 2 (1976), pp. 17–36.

Brock, Sebastian P., 'Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek', *Journal of the Syriac Academy*, III (1977), pp. 1–17.

Brock, Sebastian P., 'Syriac Historical Writing: a Survey of the Main Sources', *Journal of the Iraqi Academy, Syriac Corporation*, 5 (1979–80), pp. 297–326.

Brock, Sebastian P., 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning', in Garsoian, N., Matthews, T., and Thompson, R. (eds.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1982), pp. 17–34.

Brock, Sebastian P., 'Syriac Views of Emergent Islam', in Juynboll, G. H. A. (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 9–21.

Brock, Sebastian P., 'The Syriac Background to the world of Theodore of Tarsus', in Lapidge, M. (ed.), *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 30–53.

Brock, Sebastian P., *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1997).

Brown, Harold O. J., *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church* (Hendrickson, 1988).

Burton, John, *The Sources of Islamic Law: Islamic Theories of Abrogation* (Edinburgh University Press, 1990).

Calder, Norman, 'From Midrash to Scripture: the Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition', *Le Muséon*, 101 (1988), pp. 375–402.

Calder, Norman, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

Calzolari, Valentina and Barnes, Jonathan (eds.), *L'œuvre de David l'Invincible et la transmission de la pensée grecque dans la tradition armènienne et syriaque* (Brill, 2009).

Cameron, Averil, 'Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages', in Bowman, A. and Woolf, G. (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 198–215.

Cameron, Averil, 'New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature: Seventh-Eighth Centuries', in Conrad, L. I. and Cameron, A. (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1989).

Cameron, Averil, 'How to Read Heresiology', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 33.3 (2003), pp. 471–92.

Cameron, Averil, 'Democratization Revisited: Culture and Late Antique and Early Byzantine Elites', in Conrad, L. I. and Haldon, J. (eds.), *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Darwin Press, 2004), pp. 91–107.

Cameron, Averil, 'New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature, A Title Revisited', in Johnson, S. F. (ed.), *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Ashgate, 2006), pp. 11–28.

Cancik, Hubert, et al., *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* (Brill, 2002).

Carol, Maccormack, 'Clitoridectomy', *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 3 (2005), pp. 1824–26.

Chadwick, Henry, 'Orthodoxy and Heresy from the Death of Constantine to the Eve of the First Council of Ephesus', in Cameron, A. and Garnsey, P. (eds.), *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 562–80.

Chadwick, Henry, 'The Mind of Olympiodorus, Deacon of Alexandria', in Chadwick, H. (ed.), *Studies on Ancient Christianity* (Ashgate Variorum, 2005), pp. 1–6 (XIV).

Collison, Robert Lewis, *Encyclopaedias: Their History throughout the Ages* (2nd edn.; Hafner, 1966).

Conrad, Lawrence I., 'Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some Indications of Intercultural Transmission', *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 15 (1990), pp. 1–44.

Conrad, Lawrence I., 'The Conquest of Arwad: A Source Critical Study in the Historiography of the Early Medieval Near East', in Conrad, L. I. and Cameron, A. (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 317–401.

Constantelos, Demetrios J., 'The Moslem Conquests of the Near East as revealed in the Greek Sources of the VIIth and the VIIIth centuries', *Byzantion*, 42 (1972), pp. 325–57.

Conticello, Vassa S., 'Jean Damascène', in Goulet, R. (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* (Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 2000), pp. 989–1012.

Cook, David, 'New Testament Citations in the Hadith Literature and the Question of Early Gospel Translations into Arabic', in Grypeou, E., Swanson, M., and Thomas, D. (eds.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Brill, 2006), pp. 185–223.

Cook, Michael A., *Muhammad* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

Cook, Michael A., *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Coyle, John Kevin, *Manichaeism and its Legacy* (Brill, 2009).

Crone, Patricia and Cook, Michael, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Crone, Patricia and Hinds, Martin, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Crone, Patricia, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Basil Blackwell, 1987).

Crone, Patricia, 'Two Legal Problems Bearing on the Early History of the Qur'ān', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 18 (1994), pp. 1–37.

Crone, Patricia, 'Quraysh and the Roman Army: Making Sense of the Meccan Leather Trade', *Bulletin of the School or Oriental and African Studies*, 70.1 (2007), pp. 63–88.

Daniel, Nornan, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (2nd edn.; Oneworld, 1993).

Davis, Leo D., *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325–787): Their History and Theology* (Liturgical Press, 1990).

Decret, Francois, 'Saint Augustin, témoin du manichéisme dans l'Afrique romaine', in Mayer, C. and Chelius, K. H. (eds.), *Internationales Symposion über den Stand der Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), pp. 87–97.

Desjardins, Michael, 'Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of Hairesis in the Early Christian Era', *The Second Century*, 8.2 (1991), pp. 65–82.

Dick, Ignace, 'Un continuateur arabe de saint Jean Damascène: Theodore Abuqurra, évêque melkite de Harran', *Proche-Orient chrétien*, 12–13 (1962–63), pp. 209–23, 317–32, 114–29.

Dodge, Bayard, 'The Sabians of Harran', in Sarruf, F. and Tamim, S. (eds.), *American University of Beirut Festival Book (Festschrift)* (American University of Beirut, 1967), pp. 59–85.

Donner, Fred M., *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton University Press, 1981).

Donner, Fred M., *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Origins* (Darwin Press, 1998).

Donner, Fred M., 'From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-Identity in the Early Islamic Community', *Al-Abhath*, 50–51 (2002–03), pp. 9–53.

Donner, Fred M., 'The Historical Context', in McAuliffe, J. D. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 23–40.

Donner, Fred M., 'The Qur'ān in Recent Scholarship—Challenges and Desiderata', in Reynolds, G. S. (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 29–50.

Donner, Fred M., *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

Doody, Aude, 'Pliny's Natural History: Enkuklios Paideia and the Ancient Encyclopedia', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 70.1 (2009), pp. 1–21.

Douglas, Mary, *How Institutions Think* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept s of Pollution and Taboo* (Routledge, 2002).

Drijvers, Hans J. W., 'The Testament of our Lord: Jacob of Edessa's Response to Islam', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 104–14.

Dutton, Yasin, *The Origins of Islamic Law: the Qur'an, the Muwatta' and Madinan 'Amal* (Curzon, 1999).

Erismann, Christophe, 'A World of Hypostases: John of Damascus' Rethinking of Aristotle's Categorical Ontology', *Studia Patristica*, 50 (2010), pp. 251–69.

Evans, G. R. and Ludlow, Morwenna, 'Patristics', in Jones, G. (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology* (Basil Blackwell, 2004), pp. 113–32.

Ferreiro, Alberto, 'Jerome's Polemic against Priscillian in his Letter to Ctesiphon (133, 4)', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 39.2 (1993), pp. 309–32.

Ferreiro, Alberto, *Simon Magus in Patristic, Medieval, and Early Modern Traditions* (Brill, 2005).

Figueras, Pau, 'The Impact of the Islamic Conquest on the Christian Communities of South Palestine', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 279–93.

Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Maurice, *Le pèlerinage à la Mekke, étude d'histoire religieuse* (P. Geuthner, 1923).

Gaudeul, Jean-Marie, *Encounters & Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History*, 2 vols. (Pontificio istituto di studi arabi e d'islamistica, 1990).

Ghabban, Ali ibn Ibrahim and Hoyland, Robert, 'The Inscription of Zuhayr, the Oldest Islamic Inscription (24 AH/AD 644–645), the Rise of the Arabic Script and the Nature of the Early Islamic State', *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*, 19 (2008), pp. 210–37.

Giladi, Avner, 'Normative Islam vs. Local Tradition: Some Observations on Female Circumcision with Special Reference to Egypt', *Arabica*, 44 (1997), pp. 254–67.

Gilliot, Claude, 'Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qurʾān', in Reynolds, G. S. (ed.), *The Qurʾān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 88–108.

Glucker, John, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).

Glucker, John, 'Cicero's Philosophical Affiliations', in Dillon, J. M. and Long, A. A. (eds.), *The Question of "Eclecticism": Studies in later Greek Philosophy* (University of California Press, 1996), pp. 34–69.

Goldziher, Ignaz, *Muslim Studies*, trans. Barber and Stern (Allen and Unwin, 1971).

Gorke, A. and Schoeler, G., 'Reconstructing the Earliest *sīra* Texts: the Higra in the Corpus of ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr', *Der Islam*, 82.2 (2005), pp. 209–20.

Gouillard, Jean, 'L'hérésie dans l'empire byzantine des origines au XIIe siècle', *Travaux et Mémoires*, 1 (1965), pp. 299–324.

Grabar, Oleg, 'Iconoclasm and Islam', in Bryer, A. and Herrin, J. (eds.), *Iconoclasm* (1977), pp. 45–52.

Green, Tamara M., *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran* (Brill, 1992).

Greenfield, Richard P. H., *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988).

Griffith, Sidney H., 'The Prophet Muhammad, his Scripture and his Message according to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the First Abbasid Century', in Fahd, T. (ed.), *La Vie du Prophète Mahomet: Colloque de Strasbourg, Octobre 1980* (Presses universitaires de France, 1983), pp. 99–146.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'Theodore Abu Qurrah's Arabic Tract on the Christian Practice of Venerating Images', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 105.1 (1985), pp. 53–73.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'Anastasios of Sinai, the Hodegos, and the Muslims', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 32.4 (1987), pp. 341–58.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'Free Will in Christian Kalam: The Doctrine of Theodore Abu Qurrah', *Parole de l'Orient*, 14 (1987), pp. 79–107.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic', *Muslim World*, 78 (1988), pp. 1–28.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'Bashir/Beser: Boon Companion of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III; the Islamic Recension of his Story', *Le Muséon*, 103 (1990), pp. 293–327.

Griffith, Sidney H., *Theodore Abu Qurrah: The Intellectual Profile of an Arab Christian writer of the First Abbasid century* (Tel Aviv University, 1992).

Griffith, Sidney H., 'Muslims and Church Councils; the Apology of Theodore Abu Qurrah', *Studia Patristica*, 25 (1993), pp. 270–99.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'Muhammad and the Monk Bahira: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times', *Oriens Christianus*, 79 (1995), pp. 146–74.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam: Constantinople and the Church in the Holy Land in the Ninth Century', *Medieval Encounters: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue*, 3.3 (1997), pp. 231–65.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 51 (1997), pp. 11–33.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'What Has Constantinople to Do with Jerusalem? Palestine in the Ninth Century; Byzantine Orthodoxy in the World of Islam', in Brubaker, L. (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive? Papers from the Thirtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Ashgate, 1998), pp. 181–94.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'The Monk in the Emir's *Majlis*: Reflections on a Popular Genre of Christian Literary Apologetics in Arabic in the Early Islamic Period', in Lazarus-Yafeh, H., et al. (eds.), *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam* (1999), pp. 13–65.

Griffith, Sidney H., 'The Qur'ān in Arab Christians Texts: The Development of an Apologetical Argument: Abū Qurrah in the Mağlis of Al-Ma'mūn', *Parole de l'Orient*, 24 (1999), pp. 203–33.

Griffith, Sidney H., "'Melkites', 'Jacobites' and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-Century Syria", in Thomas, D. (ed.), *Syrian Christians Under Islam: The First Thousand Years* (Brill, 2001), pp. 9–56.

Griffith, Sidney H., *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic: Muslim-Christian Encounters in the Early Islamic Period* (Variorum, 2002).

Griffith, Sidney H., *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2008).

Griffith, Sidney H., 'John of Damascus and the Church in Syria in the Umayyad Era: The Intellectual and Cultural Milieu of Orthodox Christians in the World of Islam', *Hugoye*, 2 (2008)<http://syrcom.cua.edu/syrcom/Hugoye>.

Grohmann, Adolf, et al. (eds.), *Expédition Philby-Ryckmans-Lippens en Arabie, 2ème partie: Textes épigraphiques, volume 1* (Publications Universitaires, 1962).

Gutas, Dimitri, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early Abbasid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th centuries)* (Routledge, 1998).

Gwynn, David M., *The Eusebians: The Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the construction of the Arian Controversy* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

Gwynn, David M., 'From Iconoclasm to Arianism: The Construction of Christian Tradition in the Iconoclast Controversy', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 47 (2007), pp. 225–51.

Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Haldon, John, 'The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediteranean Society and Belief', in Conrad, L. I. and Cameron, A. (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 107–48.

Hallaq, Wael B., *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Hamza, Feras, et al., *An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

Hanson, Craig L., 'Manuel I Comnenus and the "God of Muhammad": A Study in Byzantine Ecclesiastical Politics', in Tolan, J. V. (ed.), *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam* (Garland Publishing, 1996), pp. 55–82.

Hasan, Perween, 'The Footprint of the Prophet', *Muqarnas*, 10 (1993), pp. 335–43.

Hawting, G. R., 'The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca', in Juynboll, G. H. A. (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (1982), pp. 23–47.

Hawting, G. R., *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam, from Polemic to History* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Hawting, G. R., *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate A.D. 661–750* (2nd edn.; Routledge, 2000).

Hawting, G. R., *The Development of Islamic Ritual* (Ashgate, 2006).

Healey, J. F., 'Syriac Sources and the Umayyad Period', in Bakhit, A. and Schick, R. (eds.), *The Fourth International Conference on the History of Bilad al-Sham During the Umayyad Period* (al-Jāmiyah al-Urdunīyah, 1989), pp. 1–10.

Hellholm, David (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Mohr, 1989).

Henderson, John B., *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and Early Christian Patterns* (State University of New York Press, 1998).

Herbermann, Charles G., et al., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, 17 vols. (Robert Appleton, 1910).

Holl, Karl, *Fragmente vornicèanischer Kirchenvèater aus den Sacra parallela* (J. C. Hinrichs, 1899).

Holl, Karl, *Die handschriftliche Uberlieferung des Epiphanius* (*Ancoratus und Panarion*) (J. C. Hinrichs, 1910).

Horden, Peregrin and Purcell, Nicholas, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Basil Blackwell, 2000).

Horovitz, Josef, *Koranische Untersuchungen* (Walter de Gruyter, 1926).

Hoyland, Robert, 'The Correspondence between Leo III (714–41) and 'Umar II (717–20)', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 165–77.

Hoyland, Robert, 'The Content and Context of Early Arabic Inscriptions', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 17 (1997), pp. 77–102.

Huart, Clément, 'Une nouvelle source du Qoran', *Journal Asiatique*, 10.4 (1904), pp. 125–67.

Humfress, Caroline, 'Citizens and Heretics: Late Roman Lawyers on Christian Heresy', in Iricinschi, E. and Zellentin, H. M. (eds.), *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 128–42.

Huxley, George, 'Sixty Martyrs of Jerusalem', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 18.4 (1977), pp. 369–74.

Inglebert, Hervé, 'L'histoire des hérésies chez les hérésiologues', in Pouderon, B. and Duval, Y.-M. (eds.), *L'historiographie de l'Église des premiers siècles* (Beauchesne, 2001), pp. 105–25.

Iricinschi, Eduard and Zellentin, Holger M. (eds.), *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

Iricinschi, Eduard and Zellentin, Holger M., 'Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Heresiologies', in Iricinschi, E. and Zellentin, H. M. (eds.), *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 1–27.

Jaeger, Werner, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Belknap Press, 1961).

Jeffery, Arthur, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* (Oriental Institute, 1938).

Jeffreys, Elizabeth, 'Notes Toward a Discussion of the Depiction of the Umayyads in Byzantine Literature', in Haldon, J. and Conrad, L. I. (eds.), *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Darwin Press, 2004), pp. 133–48.

Johns, Jeremy, 'Archaeology and the History of Early Islam: The First Seventy Years', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 46, 4 (2003), pp. 411–36.

Kaegi, Walter Emil, Jr., 'Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest', *Church History*, 38.2 (1969), pp. 139–49.

Kaldellis, Anthony, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Kalogeras, Nikolaos Michael, 'Byzantine Childhood Education and its Social Role from the Sixth Century unti the end of Iconoclasm', (University of Chicago, 2000).

Kalvesmaki, Joel, 'Formation of the Early Christian Theology of Arithmetic: Number Symbolism in the Late Second and Early Third Century', Ph.D. (Catholic University of America, 2006).

Katz, Marion H., *Body of Text: The Emergence of the Sunni Law of Ritual Purity* (SUNY Press, 2002).

Kazhdan, Alexander P., *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)* (National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1999).

Kennedy, Hugh, 'From Polis to Madina', *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies*, 106 (1985), pp. 3–27.

Khoury, Adel-Théodore, *Les Théologiens byzantins et l'Islam: Textes et auteurs (VIIIe–XIIIe S.)* (2nd edn.; Nauwelaerts, 1969).

Khoury, Adel-Théodore, *Polemique Byzantine Contre l'Islam (VIIIe–XIIIe S.)* (Brill, 1972).

Khoury, Paul, 'Jean Damascène et l'Islam', *Proche-Orient Chrétien*, 7, 8 (1957–8), pp. 44–63, 313–39.

Kim, Young Richard, 'The Imagined Worlds of Epiphanius of Cyprus', (University of Michigan, 2006).

Kim, Young Richard, 'Reading the Panarion as Collective Biography: The Heresiarch as Unholy Man', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 64.4 (2010), pp. 382–413.

King, N. Q., 'S. Joannis Damasceni De haeresibus cap. CI and Islam', *Studia Patristica*, 8 (1963), pp. 76–81.

Kister, M. J., 'Maqam Ibrahim: A Stone with an Inscription', *Le Muséon*, 84 (1971), pp. 477–91.

Kister, M. J., 'On 'Concessions' and Conduct. A Study in Early Hadith', in Juynboll, G. H. A. (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 89–108.

Kister, M. J., "… and he was born circumcised …': some notes on circumcision in hadith', *Oriens*, 34 (1994), pp. 10–30.

Klein, Wassilios, 'War Main Priester der Perserkirche?' in Tongerloo, A. v. and Cirillo, L. (eds.), *Atti del terzo Congresso internazionale di studi "Manicheismo e oriente cristiano antico", Arcavata di Rende, Amantea, 31 agosto–5 settembre 1993* (Brepols, 1997).

Knorr, Ortwin, 'Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte des "Liber de Haeresibus" des Johannes von Damaskus (um 650–vor 754): Anmerkungen zur Edition B. Kotters', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 91 (1998), pp. 59–69.

Kolbaba, Tia M., *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (University of Illinois Press, 2000).

Koningsveld, P. S. v., 'The Apology of Al-Kindi', in Hettema, T. L., Kooij, A. v. d., and Snoek, J. A. M. (eds.), *Religious Polemics in Context: Papers presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (Lisor) held at Leiden, 27–28 April, 2000* (Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), pp. 69–92.

Koren, Judith and Nevo, Yehuda D., 'Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies', *Der Islam*, 68 (1991), pp. 87–107.

Kotter, Bonifatius, *Die Überlieferung der Pege Gnoseos des hl. Johannes von Damaskos* (Buch-Kunstverlag, 1959).

Kueny, Kathryn, 'Abraham's Test: Islamic Male Circumcision as Anti/Ante-Covenental Practice', in Reeves, J. C. (ed.), *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality* (Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 161–82.

Lammens, H., 'Le Sanctuaire preislamites …"', *Melanges de la Faculte Orientale de l'Universite St Joseph de Beyrouth*, 11 (1926), pp. 41–73.

Lamoreaux, John C., 'Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 42 (2001), pp. 361–86.

Lamoreaux, John C., 'The Biography of Theodore Abu Qurrah Revisited', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56 (2002), pp. 25–40.

Lampe, G. W. H. (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Clarendon Press, 1961).

Le Boulluec, Allain, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque: ii*[e]*–iii*[e] *siècles* (Etudes augustiniennes, 1985).

Lecker, Michael, *The "Constitution of Medina": Muhammad's First Legal Document* (Darwin Press Inc., 2004).

Lecker, Michael, *People, Tribes and Society in Arabia around the time of Muhammad* (Ashgate, 2005).

Lemerle, Paul, Lindsay, Helen, and Moffatt, Ann, *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase: Notes and Remarks on Education and Culture in Byzantium from its Origins to the 10th century* (Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986).

Lester, Toby, 'What is the Koran?' *Atlantic Monthly*, 283.1 (1999), pp. 43–56.

Liddell, H. G. and Scott, R. (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Clarendon Press, 1996).

Lieu, Samuel N. C., *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East* (Brill, 1994).

Lieu Samuel, N. C., 'The Self-identity of the Manichaeans in the Roman East', *Mediterranean Archaeology*, 11 (1998), pp. 205–28.

Lim, Richard, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (University of California Press, 1995).

Lings, Martin, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Revised edn.; Islamic Texts Society, 1991).

Lossky, Vladimir, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (SVS Press, 1976).

Louth, Andrew, *A Christian Theologian at the Court of the Caliph: Some Cultural Reflections* (Goldsmiths' College, 1995).

Louth, Andrew, 'St. John Damascene: Preacher and Poet', in Cunningham, M. and Allen, P. (eds.), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Brill, 1998), pp. 247–66.

Louth, Andrew, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

Louth, Andrew, 'The Pege Gnoseos of St John Damascene: Its Date and Development', in Dendrinos, C. and Chrysostomides, J. (eds.), *Porphyrogenita: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (Ashgate, 2003), pp. 335–40.

Louth, Andrew, 'The Reception of Dionysius up to Maximus the Confessor', *Modern Theology*, 24.4 (2008), pp. 573–83.

Lovejoy, Arthur O., et al., *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Johns Hopkins pbks. edn.; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

Lowry, Joseph E., *Early Islamic Legal Theory: The Risāla of Muhammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfiī* (Brill, 2007).

Luxenberg, Christoph, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache* (Das Arabische Buch, 2000).

Luxenberg, Christoph, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran* (Verlag Hans Schiler, 2007).

Lyman, J. Rebecca, '2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 11.2 (2003), pp. 209–22.

Lyman, Rebecca, 'The Making of a Heretic: The Life of Origen in Epiphanius Panarion 64', *Studia Patristica*, 31 (1997), pp. 445–51.

Lyman, Rebecca J., 'Ascetics and Bishops. Epiphanius on Orthodoxy', in Elm, S., Rebillard, E., and Romano, A. (eds.), *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, Histoire. Orthodoxy, Christianity, History* (Ecole Francaise de Rome, 2000), pp. 149–61.

Lyman, Rebecca J., 'Heresiology: The Invention of 'Heresy' and 'Schism'', in Casiday, A. and Norris, F. W. (eds.), *Constantine to c. 600* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 296–313.

MacCoull, L. S. B., 'Anastasius of Sinai and the Ten-Horned Dragon', *Patristic and Byzantine Review*, 9 (1990), pp. 193–94.

Mahé, Jean-Pierre, 'Le probleme de l'authenticité et de la valeur de la chronique de Lewond', *L'Arménie et Byzance: Histoire et Culture* (Publications de la Sorbonne: Centre de recherches d'histoire et de civilisation byzantines, 1996), pp. 119–26.

Mango, Cyril, 'The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, AD 750–850' in Mango, Cyril and Ševčenko, Ihor (eds.), *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1975), pp. 29–46.

Mango, Cyril, 'Greek Culture in Palestine after the Arab Conquest', in Cavallo, G., Gregorio, G. d., and Maniaci, M. (eds.), *Scritture, Libri e Testi nelle Aree Provinciali*

di Bisanzio Atti del seminario di Erice, 18–25 settembre 1988 (Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo, 1991), pp. 149–60.

Mango, Marlia M., 'The Production of Syriac Manuscripts, 400–740 AD', in Cavallo, G., Gregorio, G. d., and Maniaci, M. (eds.), *Scritture, Libri e Testi nelle Aree Provinciali di Bisanzio Atti del seminario di Erice, 18–25 settembre 1988* (1991), pp. 161–80.

Mansfeld, Jaap, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' "Elenchos" as a Source for Greek Philosophy* (Brill, 1992).

Martinez, F. J., 'Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo Athanasius', unpublished Ph.D. (Catholic University of America, 1985).

McAuliffe, Jane D., *Qur'ānic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

McAuliffe, Jane D., 'Christians in the Qur'ān and Tafsīr', in Waardenburg, J. J. (ed.), *Muslim Perceptions of other Religions: A Historical Survey* (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 105–21.

McAuliffe, Jane D. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (Brill, 2001).

McClure, Judith, 'Handbooks Against Heresy in the West, from the Late Fourth to the Late Sixth Centuries', *Journal of Theological Studies*, XXX (1979), pp. 186–97.

McGrath, Alister E., *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth* (SPCK Publishing, 2009).

Melvin, Glenn, 'An Analysis of the Theological Method of Theodoret of Cyrus in the "Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium"', (Catholic University of America, 1990).

Merrill, John E., 'John of Damascus on Islam', *Muslim World*, 41.2 (1951), pp. 88–97.

Meyendorff, John, 'Byzantine View of Islam', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 18 (1964), pp. 115–32.

Millar, Fergus, 'Hagar, Ishmael, Josephus, and the Origins of Islam', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 44 (1993), pp. 23–45.

Montsoulas, E., 'Der Begriff Haresis' bei Epiphanius von Salamis', *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 92 (1963), pp. 362–71.

Motzki, Harald, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz: ihre Entwicklung in Mekka bis zur Mitte des 2./8 Jahrhunderts* (Franz Steiner, 1991).

Motzki, Harald, 'The Musannaf of 'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani as a Source of Authentic Ahadith of the First Century AH' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 50 (1991), pp. 1–21.

Motzki, Harald, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence: Meccan Fiqh Before the Classical Schools*, trans. Katz, M. H. (Brill, 2002).

Mourad, S. A., 'Mary in the Qur'an: A Reexamination of Her Presentation', in Reynolds, G. S. (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 163–74.

Munitiz, Joseph, 'Anastasios of Sinai: Speaking and Writing to the People of God', in Cunningham, M. and Allen, P. (eds.), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Brill, 1998), pp. 227–45.

Nance, Andre, 'Porphyry: The Man and His Demons', *Hirundo: The McGill Journal of Classical Studies*, 2 (2002), pp. 37–57.

Nasrallah, Joseph, *Saint Jean de Damas: Son Époque--Sa Vie--Son Oeuvre* (Imprimerie Saint Paul, 1950).

Neuwirth, Angelika, 'Qur'an and History—a Disputed Relationship: Some Reflections on Qur'anic History and History in the Qur'an', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 5.1 (2003), pp. 1–18.

Neuwirth, Angelika, 'Archäologie einer Heiligen Schrift. Überlegungen zum Koran vor seiner Kompilation', in Burgmer, C. (ed.), *Streit um den Koran: die Luxenberg-Debatte: Standpunkte und Hintergrèunde* (3rd edn., Schiller, 2004), pp. 82–97.

Nevo, Yehuda and Koren, Judith, 'The Origins of the Muslim Descriptions of the Jahili Meccan Sanctuary', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 49.1 (1990), pp. 23–44.

Nevo, Yehuda and Koren, Judith, *Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State* (Prometheus, 2003).

Nigg, Walter, *Das Buch der Ketzer* (Artemis Verlag, 1949).

Nigg, Walter, *The Heretics: Heresy Through the Ages* (Dorset Press, 1962).

Noth, Albrecht, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, trans. Bonner, M. (Darwin Press, 1994).

Olster, David, 'Ideological Transformation and the Evolution of Imperial Presentation in the Wake of Islam's Victory', in Grypeou, E., Swanson, M., and Thomas, D. (eds.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Brill, 2006), pp. 45–71.

Osborn, Eric Francis, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Paño, María Victoria Escribano, 'The Social Exclusion of Heretics in Codex Theodosianus XVI', in Aubert, J.-J. and Blanchard, P. (eds.), *Droit, religion et société dans le Code Théodosien* (Université de Neuchâtel, 2009), pp. 39–66.

Pappadoyannakis, Yannis, 'Instruction by Question and Answer: The Case of Late Antique and Byzantine Erotapokriseis', in Johnson, S. F. (ed.), *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Ashgate, 2006), pp. 91–106.

Πασχαλίδης, Συμεών, *Νικήτας Δαβίδ Παφλαγών: τὸ προσώπο καί τό εργο του* (Κέντρο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 1999).

Patrich, Joseph (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Peeters, 2001).

Pelikan, Jaroslav and Hotchkiss, V. R., *Creeds & Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 4 vols. (Yale University Press, 2003).

Peters, F. E., *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton University Press, 1994).

Plested, Marcus, *The Macarian Legacy: The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Pourkier, Aline, *L'hérésiologie chez Epiphane de Salamine* (Beauchesne, 1992).

Praechter, Karl, 'Richtungen und Schulen im Neuplatonismus', *Genethliakon für Carl Robert* (Weidmann, 1910), pp. 105–55.

Praechter, Karl and Dörrie, Heinrich, *Kleine Schriften* (Olms, 1973).

Rajan, Tilottama, 'The Encyclopedia and the University of Theory: Idealism and the Organization of Knowledge', *Textual Practice*, 21.2 (2007), pp. 335–58.

Reinink, Gerrit J., 'Ps.-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam', in Cameron, A. and Conrad, L. I. (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 149–87.

Retsö, Jan, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (Routledge, 2003).

Reynolds, Gabriel S. (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008).

Richard, Marcel, 'ΑΠΟ ΦΩΝΗΣ', *Byzantion*, 20 (1950), pp. 191–222.

Richard, Marcel, 'Florilèges grecs', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Le Cerf, 1964), pp. 475–512.

Richard, Marcel, 'Le traité de George Hiéromoine sur les hérésies', *Revue des études byzantines*, 28 (1970), pp. 239–69.

Richard, Marcel, *Opera Minora*, 3 vols. (Leuven University Press, 1976–77).

Richter, Gerhard, *Die Dialektik des Johannes von Damaskos: Eine Untersuchung des Textes nach seinen Quellen und seiner Bedeutung* (Buch-Kunstverlag, 1964).

Richter, Gerhard (ed.), *Philosophische Kapitel* (Anton Hiersemann, 1982).

Rippin, Andrew and Knappert, Jan, *Textual Sources for the study of Islam* (Manchester University Press, 1986).

Rippin, Andrew, 'Literary Analysis of Koran, Tafsir, and Sira: The Methodologies of John Wansbrough', in Warraq, I. (ed.), *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book* (Prometheus Books, 1998), pp. 351–63.

Robinson, Chase, *Empire and Elites After the Muslim Conquest: The Transformation of Northern Mesopotamia* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Robinson, Chase, *Abd al-Malik* (Oneworld Publications, 2005).

Robinson, Chase, 'Early Islamic History: Parallels and Problems', in Williamson, H. G. M. (ed.), *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 91–106.

Robinson, Thomas A., 'Heresy: Christian Concepts', in Jones, L. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* (6; Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 3925–30.

Rochow, Ilse, 'Die Häresie der Athinganer im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert und die Frage ihres Fortlebens', in Köpstein, H. and Winkelmann, F. (eds.), *Studien zum 8. und 9. Jahrhundert in Byzanz* (Akademie-Verlag, 1983), pp. 163–78.

Roggema, Barbara, 'A Christian Reading of the Qur'an: The Legend of Sergius-Bahīrā and its use of Qur'an and Sīra', in Thomas, D. (ed.), *Syrian Christians Under Islam: the First Thousand Years* (Brill, 2001), pp. 57–74.

Roggema, Barbara, 'The Legend of Sergius Bahīrā: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam', unpublished Ph.D. (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2007).

Rorem, Paul and Lamoreaux, John C., *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus: Annotating the Areopagite* (Clarendon Press, 1998).

Rosenthal, Franz, 'Some Minor Problems in the Qur'an', in Warraq, I. (ed.), *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary* (Prometheus Books, 2002), pp. 322–42.

Roueché, Mossman, 'Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 23 (1974), pp. 61–76.

Roueché, Mossman, 'A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 29 (1980), pp. 71–98.

Roueché, Mossman, 'The Definitions of Philosophy and a New Fragment of Stephanus the Philosopher', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 40 (1990), pp. 107–28.

Rubin, Uri, 'Al-samad and the High God: An Interpretation of Sura CXII', *Der Islam*, 61 (1984), pp. 197–217.

Rubin, Uri, 'The Ka'ba: Aspects of its Ritual Functions and Position in Pre-Islamic and early Islamic times', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 8 (1986), pp. 97–131.

Rubin, Uri, 'Hanifiyya and Ka'ba: An Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of Din Ibrahim', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 13 (1990), pp. 85–112.

Rubin, Uri, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the early Muslims* (Darwin Press, 1995).

Runia, David T., 'Review of La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque: iie–iiie siècles', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 42.2 (1988), pp. 188–207.

Runia, David T., 'Philo of Alexandria and the Greek Hairesis-Model', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 53.2 (1999), pp. 117–47.

Saadi, Abdul-Massih, 'Nascent Islam in the Seventh Century Syriac Sources', in Reynolds, G. S. (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 217–22.

Sahas, Daniel J., '"Holosphyros?" A Byzantine Perception of "The God of Muhammad"', in Haddad, Y. Y. (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Encounters* (University Press of Florida, 1995), pp. 109–25.

Sahas, Daniel J., *John of Damascus on Islam: The Heresy of the Ishmaelites* (Brill, 1972).

Sahas, Daniel J., 'John of Damascus on Islam Revisited', *Abr-Nahrain*, 23 (1984–85), pp. 104–18.

Sahas, Daniel J., 'The Seventh Century in Byzantine-Muslim Relations: Characteristics and Forces', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 2 (1991), pp. 3–22.

Sahas, Daniel J., 'The Arab Character of The Christian Disputation with Islam: The Case of John of Damascus (ca. 655–ca. 749)', in Lewis, B. and Niewöhner, F. (eds.), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter* (Otto Harrasowitz, 1992), pp. 185–205.

Sahas, Daniel J., 'Cultural Interaction during the Umayyad Period: the 'Circle' of John of Damascus', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 35–66.

Samir, Khalil, 'Note sur les citations biblique chez Abū Qurrah', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 49 (1983), pp. 469–86.

Samir, Khalil, 'L'ère de l'Incarnation dans les manuscrits melkites du 11e au 14e siècle', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 53 (1987), pp. 193–201.

Samir, Khalil, 'Le traité sur les icônes d'Abū Qurrah mentionné par Eutychius', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 58 (1992), pp. 461–74.

Samir, Khalil, 'The Earliest Arab Apology for Christianity (c. 750)', in Samir, S. K. and Nielsen, J. S. (eds.), *Christian Arabic Apologetics During the Abbasid Period* (*750–1258*) (Brill, 1994), pp. 57–114.

Schacht, Joseph, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford University Press, 1953).

Schick, Robert, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine To Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Darwin Press, 1995).

Schoeler, G., 'Schreiben und Veroffentlichen: Zu Verwendung und Funktion der Schrift in den ersten islamischen Jahrhunderten', *Der Islam*, 69 (1992), pp. 1–43.

Schoeler, G., 'Writing and Publishing: On the Use and Function of Writing in the First Centuries of Islam', *Arabica*, 44 (1997), pp. 423–35.

Schott, Jeremy, 'Heresiology as Universal History in Epiphanius's Panarion', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*, 10.3 (2007), pp. 546–63.

Schreiner, Peter, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, 3 vols. (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975).

Segal, J. B., 'Two Syriac Inscriptions from Harran', *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, 20 (1957), pp. 513–22.

Segal, J. B., *Edessa: 'The Blessed City'* (Clarendon Press, 1970).

Seidel, Jonathan, Baskin, Judith, and Snowman, Leonard, 'Circumcision', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 4 (2007), pp. 730–35.

Seidensticker, Tilman, 'The Autheticity of the Poems ascribed to Umayya Ibn Abī al-Salt', in Smart, J. R. (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature* (Curzon, 1996), pp. 87–101.

Senturk, Recep, 'The "Constitution of Medina": Muhammad's First Legal Document by Michael Lecker', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 19.2 (2008), pp. 251–53.

Shahid, Irfan, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1984).

Shahid, Irfan, *Rome and the Arabs: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1984).

Shahid, Irfan, 'Islam and *Oriens Christianius*: Makka 610–622 AD', in Grypeou, E. (ed.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Brill, 2006), pp. 9–31.

Shboul, Ahmad, 'Change and Continuity in Early Islamic Damascus', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 67–102.

Shoemaker, Stephen, 'Epiphanius of Salamis, the Kollyridians, and the Early Dormition Narratives: The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 16.3 (2008), pp. 371–401.

Sillett, Helen, 'Orthodoxy and Heresy in Theodoret of Cyrus' Compendium of Heresies', in Elm, S., Rebillard, É., and Romano, A. (eds.), *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, Histoire = Orthodoxy, Christianity, History* (École Française de Rome, 2000), pp. 261–73.

Simon, Marcel, 'From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy', in Schoedel, W. R. and Wilken, R. L. (eds.), *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition* (Editions Beauchesne, 1979), pp. 101–16.

Smith, Robert Wayne, '"Arabia Haeresium Ferax?" A History of Christianity in the Transjordan to 395 C.E.' (Miami University, 1994).

Smith, Wilfred C., '*Arkān*', in Little, D. P. (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Civilization presented to Niyazi Berkes* (Brill, 1976), pp. 303–16.

Sorabji, Richard (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (Duckworth, 1990).

Sourdel, Dominique, 'Un pamphlet musulman anonyme d'époque 'Abbaside contre les chrétiens', *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 34 (1966), pp. 1–34.

Speck, Paul, 'Eine Interpolation in den Bilderreden des Johannes von Damaskos', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 82 (1989), pp. 114–5.

von Staden, Heinrich, 'Hairesis and Heresy: The Case of the haireseis iatrikai', in Meyer, B. F. and Sanders, E. P. (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (SCM Press, 1982), pp. 76–100.

Starr, Joshua, 'An Eastern Christian Sect: The Athinganoi', *Harvard Theological Review*, 29.2 (1936), pp. 93–106.

Stetkevych, Jaroslav, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough: Reconstructing Arabian Myth* (Indiana University Press, 1996).

Stiglmayr, Jos, 'Der Verfasser der Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 18.1 (1909), pp. 14–40.

Swanson, Mark, 'Some Considerations for the Dating of Fī tatlīt Allāh al-wāhid (Sin. Ar. 154) and al-Ǧāmi wuǧūh al-īmān (BL Or. 4950)', *Parole de l'Orient*, 18 (1993), pp. 115–42.

Swanson, Mark, 'Beyond Prooftexting: Approaches to the Qurʾān in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies', *Muslim World*, 88.3–4 (1998), pp. 297–319.

Tarrier, Zeidoun al-Muheisen Dominique, 'La Période Omeyyade dans le Nord De La Jordanie: Continuité et Rupture', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 333–41.

Thomsen, E., 'New Light on the Origin of the Holy Black Stone of the Ka'ba', *Meteoritics*, 15.1 (1980), pp. 87–91.

Thomson, Robert W., 'Armenian Variations on the Bahira Legend', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 3–4 (1979–80), pp. 884–95.

Thümmel, Hans Georg, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der sogenannten Pege gnoseos des Ioannes von Damaskos', *Byzantinoslavica*, 42 (1981), pp. 20–30.

Tolan, John V., *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (Columbia University Press, 2002).

Tollefsen, Torstein Theodor, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

Trapp, Erich (ed.), *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität: besonders des 9.–12. Jahrhunderts* (Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1993).

Trimingham, J. Spencer, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (Longman Group, 1979).

Tritton, A. S., 'The Bible Text of Theodore Abu Kurra', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 34 (1933), pp. 52–55.

Turner, John D. and Majercik, Ruth Dorothy (eds.), *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts* (Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

Turner, John D. and Majercik, Ruth Dorothy, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001).

Van Roey, Albert, 'La Lettre apologétique d'Elie à Léon, syncelle l'évêque de chalcédonien de Harran; une apologie monophysite du VIIe–IXe siècle', *Le Muséon*, 57 (1944), pp. 1–52.

Versteegh, Kees, 'Greek Translations of the Qu'ran in Christian Polemics (9th century A.D.)', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 141 (1991), pp. 52–68.

Voorhis, John W., 'John of Damascus on the Moslem Heresy', *The Moslem World*, 24 (1934), pp. 391–98.

Vryonis, Spyros, 'Byzantine Attitudes toward Islam during the Late Middle Ages', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 12 (1971), pp. 263–86.

Wansbrough, John, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 1977).

Wansbrough, John, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Oxford University Press, 1978).

Warraq, Ibn. (ed.), *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book* (Prometheus Books, 1998).

Watt, W. Montgomery, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh University Press, 1973).

Watt, W. Montgomery, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford University Press, 1974).

Watt, W. Montgomery, *Muslim-Christian Encounters: Perceptions and Misperceptions* (Routledge, 1991).

Westerink, L. G., 'Elias on the Prior Analytics', *Mnemosyne*, 14 (1961), pp. 126–39.

Westerink, L. G., 'Marginalia by Arethas in Moscow Greek MS 231', *Byzantion*, 42 (1972), pp. 196–244.

Westerink, L. G., 'The Alexandrian Commentators and the Introductions to their Commentaries', in Sorabji, R. (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (Duckworth, 1990), pp. 325–48.

Whelan, Estelle, 'Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qur'an', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 118.1 (1998), pp. 1–14.

Whitby, Michael, 'Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality', in Conrad, L. I. and Cameron, A. (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in Literary Source Material* (Darwin Press, 1992), pp. 25–80.

Whitcomb, Donald, 'Amsar in Syria? Syrian Cities after the Conquest', *Aram*, 6 (1994), pp. 1–11.

Wildberg, Christian, 'Three Neoplatonic Introductions to Philosophy: Ammonius, David, Elias', *Hermathena*, 149 (1990), pp. 33–51.

Wildberg, Christian, 'Philosophy in the Age of Justinian', in Maas, M. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 316–40.

Wiles, Maurice F., *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism Through the Centuries* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

Williams, Rowan, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (Darton Longman and Todd, 1987).

Williams, Rowan (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Wilson, Nigel Guy, 'Books and Readers in Byzantium' in Mango, Cyril and Ševčenko, Ihor (eds.), *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1975), pp. 1–15.

Wilson, Nigel Guy, *Scholars of Byzantium* (Duckworth and JHU Press, 1983).

Wisse, Frederik, 'The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology', in Krause, M. (ed.), *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honoour of Alexander Bohlig* (Brill, 1972), pp. 133–43.

Wisse, Frederik, 'The Use of Early Christian Literature as Evidence for Inner Diversity and Conflict', in Attridge, H. W., Hedrick, C. W., and Hodgson, R. (eds.), *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, & Early Christianity* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), pp. 177–90.

Wolfson, Harry A., *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Harvard University Press, 1976).

Young, Frances M., 'Did Epiphanius Know What He Meant by 'Heresy'?' *Studia Patristica*, 17.1 (1982), pp. 199–205.

Index